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THE HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE
OF THE
REIGN OF MANASSEH

INAUGURAL-DISSERTATION

PRESENTED TO THE

PHILOSOPHICAL FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BERNE

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE

DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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I.

INTRODUCTION.

1) The path of progress, along which the people of Israel passed, was strewn with evidences of great crises and conflicts. The first of these great crises was the encountering of the nation with the various forms of Canaanitish life and religion, in which the great question was the adaptation to new modes of living and thinking. The conflict was a life and death struggle between Jahwe, the primitive god of a nomadic folk, and the numerous Baalim of the adopted land. For many generations the contest continued, but gradually an awakened spirit of nationalism asserted itself, and found its expression and triumph in the culminating struggle with the Tyrian Baal. The keynote of the nation's victory was struck in the great thought, "Jahwe is the God of Israel, and Israel is Jahwe's people"; and with this triumphant battle cry upon their lips arose the forerunners of a mighty line of prophets, fearless in their denunciations of their nation's weaknesses, yet withal jealous of their nation's heritages. And bathed in this very atmosphere of vitality and patriotism, the early legends, hero tales, and national traditions were crystallized into the foundation stones of a great literature.

Following in the steps of this great beginning, we have the Classical Age of the Hebrew people, which extended from the days of Amos until the Fall of Jerusalem. It was in this period that the nation produced its greatest men, its greatest writers, and its most significant religious doctrines. It was also in this period that the nation passed through another time of stress, namely: the crisis of the foreigner, his civilization and religion. The problem was not entirely new to the

inhabitants of Palestine, but never before in the history of this small land was the influence of a foreign people so acute and overwhelming. The proudest and most noteworthy section of the people succumbed as a victim to his military ambition and avarice, and many times the remaining section seemed to be upon the point of losing all and sinking to the common level of an unproductive heathenism.

Our problem concerns one of the most important periods in this crisis—a great period of uncertainty and silence—the reign of King Manasseh of Judah, its historical and religious significance. It is evident that a scientific solution of our problem is beset with many difficulties, and the first and most important is the absence of records and information. The historians of this period of Judah's history have left us only a series of religious comments and no attempt is made to narrate any of the political and historical situations. A further difficulty is largely a matter of the personal equation, a limit of our own powers of interpretation. This difficulty is ever present in the form of a temptation to read back into primitive times our modern standards of morality and culture.

The limits of our problem are solely within the field of Old Testament literature, and our investigations will be confined primarily to the discussions of problems arising out of these sources. Many problems of a secondary nature must remain unsolved and many questions unanswered, some because of inadequate evidence and others because an answer would lead us far astray into the pre-suppositions of other fields of research. The results of years of research from these secondary sources must be assumed, because they represent the work of specialists of well-recognized ability.

2) The principal sources for our research consist of the records of the Old Testament. Two books in particular contain sections bearing directly upon the reign of Manasseh (2 K 21:1—18 and 2 Chr. 33:1—20). Have we then no other sources of information outside of these two small sections? A general examination of Old Testament literature reveals the fact that much valuable information comes to us from a comparison of the literature both before and immediately

following the days of Manasseh. These sources consist in further portions in Kings and Chronicles, and especially the writings of the prophets during these times, for instance, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Also the comparison of the various schools of writers from these periods furnishes us in part a source of information, for example, the writings of the Jahwist (J), Elohist (E), and the Deuteronomist (D).

The minor sources for our research consist of all non-canonical writings relative to the reign of Manasseh. The most important of these consist of the Babylonian-Assyrian inscriptions as they bear upon Palestine and the "lands of the west". In addition we have many references to Manasseh and contemporaneous periods in the great mass of Egyptian, Jewish, and Jewish-Christian traditions.

3) The method of our investigation, because of the nature of our sources, will be largely comparative. The solution of our problem, in fact, is similar to the task often confronting the natural scientist in endeavoring to restore the form of a pre-historic organism. There are many parts missing, but being in possession of certain traces of structure he is able to determine the original form. We have very little information purporting to bear directly upon the reign of Manasseh, but a comparison of the literatures contemporaneous to his time furnishes us with the indications as to changes and developments. It will be our purpose to discover as many of these developments as possible, especially as they bear upon the historical and religious situations.

Our method of treatment will follow the general lines here indicated:—

- (1) The Critical Analysis of the Sources.
 - (2) The Kingdom of Judah and its Political Relations in the Seventh Century B. C.
 - (3) The Historical Significance of the Reign of Manasseh.
 - (4) The Religious Significance of the Reign of Manasseh.
 - (5) Conclusions.
-

II.

THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SOURCES.

1) The Biblical sources for our investigations can be divided into two classes:— sources that bear directly upon the time in question, and sources that bear indirectly. The direct Biblical sources consist of the two sections in Kings and Chronicles; and the indirect or inferential sources consist mainly of all the contemporaneous literature bearing upon Manasseh's time. To be in a position to rightly judge the value and worth of these sources, we must make a critical analysis as to their origin and contents.

(1) THE DIRECT BIBLICAL SOURCES.

a) THE BOOKS OF KINGS.

The present title of the Books of Kings, מְלָכִים, may have been a part of the original title, although there seems to have been no general agreement at the time when the most important versions were made. In the best Syriac versions no recognition is made of the present division of the Books, and instead they have a division of their own emphasizing the position of the prophets.¹ Several Syriac manuscripts have retained longer titles showing that there was an effort to designate the contents. One title in particular reads, "The Book of Kings who were in that ancient people. In which book are written the stories of the prophets, who were in those times in their generations".²

The indications, as to the date and authorship of Kings, are many and certain. The Books must not be considered

¹ Two of the sub-divisions are:— 1 K. 17: 1—2 K. 2: 18, which is entitled "Elijah"; and 2 K. 2: 19—18: 21, "Elisha".

² W. E. BARNES, Kings, Intro. p. XXXIII.

as books in the manner in which we now use the term. They are not the work of one author, but the work of many writers covering a period of several generations. The most important sections are the results of compilation from earlier sources and are easily distinguished as the work of one compiler or school of compilers. The Books seem to have suffered two principal redactions, one during the reign of Jehoiachin or Zedekiah (597 B. C. f.), and the other during or closely following the Exile. Both of these redactions are made in the spirit of Deuteronomy, that is, in the spirit of the religious conceptions inaugurated by Josiah's reform of 621 B. C. The first redaction is often termed the "prophetical epitome"¹. In addition to these redactions there are sections from older sources, as for example the Annals, various excerpts from unknown sources, and additions of a very late origin.

The character and purpose of the Books of Kings is primarily religious, as the point of emphasis is upon religious institutions and their development.² They are not books of political history, but rather a series of running comments on historical situations imbued with the spirit of prophetic moralization and admonition.³ They are not books of annals even though this annalistic element appears with the introduction of new kings and important events. In most cases this historical element furnishes only the framework for the introduction of the prophetic sections; and in no case is there a careful distinction between history on the one hand and legend and story on the other. The character of the books is most clearly illustrated in the way in which different periods are treated. From a historical point of view the reign of Omri in Israel was of supreme importance, but it is hardly considered worthy of mention.⁴ The military activities of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, suffer the same fate⁵, and the

¹ STADE, Kings, SBOT. Intro.

² Cf. WELLHAUSEN, Prol. p. 226, 279.

³ The best illustration is the passage on Manasseh 2 K. 21: 1—18.

⁴ 1 K. 16: 21—28.

⁵ 2 K. 14: 23 f.

rôle of Pekah¹ in relation to the politics of Western Asia is not mentioned at all.

b) THE ANALYSIS OF 2K. 21:1—18.

In this section we have good examples of the two principal redactions of the Books of Kings. The unmistakable evidence of the pre-exilic redactor is found in the usual stereotyped form of introduction and conclusion, as in verses 1, 17, and 18; and a good example of the post-exilic redactor is found in verses 10—15.

The origin of the remaining verses is not so self-evident. The verses 2—7 bear evidences of being corrupt in places. Verse 2a evidently belongs to the usual formula of introduction in connection with verse 1. It is a part of the general verdict passed upon a king's character, "and he did that which was evil in the sight of Jahwe". The verses 2b, and 3b bear evidences of post-exilic origin, but no definite date can be assigned to 3a. The verses 4—7 are not connected in thought. Verse 5 evidently is of the same style as verse 7, because the placing of various altars in the Temple was especially an evil in later times. BENZINGER seems to find unmistakable proof for the post-exilic origin of verses 5 and 7 in the fact that Solomon's Temple had only one forecourt, and not until the time of the second Temple did two forecourts exist.² Thus in view of the natural order of 5 and 7, verse 6 seems to interrupt the sequence of thought. It is probably of doubtful origin and may have been inserted from the margin. Verse 4 is in part a repetition of 7, so STADE considers it an interpolation.³ From the remaining verses 8—16, we have assigned verses 10—15 to the post-exilic redaction, because of the thought of verse 13. Throughout the phrases are the usual idiomatic expressions of the post-exilic redactors.⁴ The verses 8 and 9 also seem to come from the same hand, as the idea

¹ 2K. 16:5f.

² Die Bücher der Könige, p. 188; cf. 1K. 6:36, also 1K. 7:8, 9, 12.

³ STADE, Kings, SBOT. p. 287.

⁴ 2K. 23:26, 27.

of Jahwe's promises concerning Israel was not treated until after the Exile.¹ Verse 16 is generally classed with verses 1 and 2a as from the hand of the first redactor, because it is parallel to the verdict passed in 2a. Therefore in the analysis of this section we have verses 1, 2a, 16, 17, 18 belonging to the pre-exilic redaction, and verses 2b, 3b, 5, 7, 8—15 belonging to the post-exilic redaction with verses 3a, 4, and 6 uncertain, but late in origin.²

V. 1. The LXX Lucian gives Manasseh's age as 10 years, but it can easily be a confusion of δέξα and δώδεκα. The name of Manasseh's mother is given as מְנַחֵם. The meaning of the name is usually given as "she in whom is my delight" or "I have my pleasure in her".³ It is a question whether or not the suffix can in any way refer to a deity (Jahwe).⁴ Some scholars claim that the name is an abbreviation of the Phoenician name חפנבעל, meaning the "pleasure of Baal".

V. 2. For וַיַּעַשׂ LXX Lucian reads καὶ ἐποίησε Μανασσῆς. . . . וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי. This is the usual expression in Kings for sins against the cultus. For כְּתוּעַבַת LXX Lucian reads with a considerable expansion καὶ ἐπορεύθη κατὰ πάντα τὰ βδελύγματα. The reference evidently is to Canaanitish worship, which was especially condemned by later writers.⁵

V. 3. For וַיִּשָּׁב LXX Lucian reads καὶ ἐπέστρεψε Μανασσῆς. The "rebuilding" of the "high places" must be taken in a very limited sense, for the "high places" were simply level places in elevated sections in the open air.⁶ Hezekiah is accredited with the removal of the "high places" (2 K. 18:4). Ahab is here Manasseh's parallel in the return to a formal heathenism

¹ 1 K. 8:15—26; 9:1f.

² BARNES assigns verses 1, 2, 17, and 18 to the first redactor and verses 3—16 to the other. J. S. SKINNER assigns verses 1—6 and 16—18 to the first redactor and verses 7—15 to the other. KITTEL (NOWACK's series 02) assigns verses 1—4, 6, 16—18 to the earlier redaction, 7—15 to the later, and verse 5 to a still later source.

³ T. K. CHEYNE, E. B. Col. 2017; NÖLDEKE, E. B. Col. 3278.

⁴ Cp. Isa. 62:4. Here it is used as a symbolical name of Zion.

⁵ Cp. 1 K. 14:24; 2 K. 17:8, 11; 2 Chr. 28:3; 33:9.

⁶ BARNES, Kings, p. 299. cf. also 1 K. 11:7.

(1K. 16:32f.). The use of אֱתָם is very suggestive that the worship of the "host of heaven" was considered as organized. The term "host of heaven" is not used in the sense of angels as in 1K. 22:19, but in reference to the heavenly bodies.¹ The references to בַּעַל and אֲשֶׁרָה both in the singular, refer to some one particular Baal as in the case with Ahab (1K. 16:32), and one particular symbol erected to a goddess.

V. 4. This verse evidently is a gloss to v. 5 based on v. 7, and should follow v. 5.² The thought of the verse is inconsistent, for the "house of Jahwe" and "Jerusalem" are not identical. To remedy this KLOSTERMANN suggests בָּעִיר instead of בְּבֵית יְהוָה.³ KITTEL likewise seeks a remedy by prefixing the article to מִזְבְּחוֹת,⁴ thus identifying "the altars" with those mentioned in v. 3; but the altars in v. 3 seemed to have been erected on the "high places". Further, the names of the gods to whom the altars were erected are not mentioned. The idiomatic construction also bears many close relations with other sections.⁵ The use of וְ with בָּנָה is also unusual.

V. 5. For מִזְבְּחוֹת LXX Vaticanus reads the singular, but it is wrong for the plurality of altars is a characteristic of the worship of the "host of heaven".⁶

V. 6. This verse is an indictment of six things forbidden in the code of Deuteronomy.⁷ וְהָעִבִּיר אֶת-בְּנוֹ בָּאֵשׁ. This is the usual phrase employed in connection with Molech worship.⁸ The LXX and 2 Chr. read בְּנָיו instead of בְּנוֹ implying that the practice was a matter of frequent occurrence. The majority of the versions seem to indicate that the singular is the more original. For לְהַקְעִים it is better to read with the majority of the Mss. of Kings, LXX, and 2 Chr., לְהַקְעִיסוֹ. The omission

¹ Cf. 2K. 17:16, Deut. 4:19; 17:3; also late passage in 2K. 23:5.

² STADE, Kings, SBOT. p. 287.

³ Cf. 2Chr. 28:24 LXX.

⁴ KITTEL, Chronicles, SBOT. p. 80.

⁵ Cf. 1K. 8:6, 29; 9:3; also Deut. 12:11.

⁶ STADE, Kings, SBOT. p. 287.

⁷ Deut. 18:10f.

⁸ 2K. 16:3; 17:17; 23:10. Another expression in Lev. 18:21; Jer. 32:3.

of the י here was evidently due to the appearance of it in the beginning of v. 7. עֵוֹן The meaning of this word is uncertain as the particular kind of augury referred to is unknown. The form is a Poel perfect from עָוַן, meaning in general "to practice soothsaying". In Isa. 2:6 we find it as עֵוְנִים and in Deut. 18:10 as מְעוֹנִין. Some scholars have explained it as a derivative from עָוַן conveying the meaning of a divination from the clouds. This meaning has been generally abandoned, because in all the passages in which it occurs no references are made to clouds. Others have sought for its original meaning in עָוַן deriving the meaning "to smite with the evil eye". Still others have sought for the solution in the Arabic (غنة) root meaning "to utter a hoarse nasal sound".¹ נָחַשׁ This is likewise one of the charges against Israel.² The form only occurs in the Piel from נָחַשׁ meaning "to practice divination, enchantment", or "to observe signs". The same word is used in 1 K. 20:33 probably meaning the reception of some kind of an omen.³ It also implies the art of hydromancy as in the example of Joseph and his cup in Gen. 44:5, 15 (J).

וַיִּשָּׂא אוֹב or "appointed them that had familiar spirits", which means that he gave them official recognition. The word אוֹב is generally used in connection with יִדְעֹנִי and refers to a class of necromancers or wizards.

V. 7. הָאִשָּׁרָה This refers evidently to the symbol erected to a "Goddess". For בְּבֵית לXX Lucian reads ἐν οἷῳ Κυρίου and 2 Chr. בְּבֵית הָאִלֹּהִים. LXX Vaticanus agrees with Kings. The majority of the Mss. read לְעֹלָם as over against לְעִלְיוֹם in 2 Chr.

V. 8. For מִשֶּׁה אֲתָם עֲבָדֵי מִשֶּׁה 2 Chr. reads בִּיר־מִשֶּׁה. The Syriac also reads the same as in Kings, but it may have been influenced by this longer reading.

V. 9. For מִנְשָׁה וַיִּתְּנֵם לXX Lucian reads καὶ ἐβδελόχθη Μανασσῆς σφόδρα καὶ ἐπλάνησεν αὐτοῦς. 2 Chr. also has an

¹ BROWN-DRIVER, Heb. Lexicon, p. 778; T. W. DAVIES, E. B. Col. 1119; W. R. SMITH, Prophets, p. 202; cf. Isa. 8:19; 24:4; JER. 27:9; JUD. 9:37.

² Also forbidden in Lev. 19:26. Cf. 2 K. 17:17 a late passage.

³ Cf. Gen. 30:27 (J).

expanded reading וַיִּתֵּן מְנַשֶּׁה אֶת־יְהוּדָה וַיִּשְׁכְּבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם. After הָרַע the LXX adds ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς Κυρίου, which is the usual parallel reading in Kings. It is possible it may have been omitted here in Kings.

V. 10. The prophetic denunciation of Manasseh was frequent in later times (Jer. 15:1—4).

V. 11. Instead of הָרַע KLOSTERMANN, KITTEL, and BENZINGER read הָרַע, in apposition to תַּחֲעֲבוֹת. STADE considers it a gloss, because it repeats v. 9 unnecessarily.¹ cf. 1K. 21:26; Amos 2:9, 10.

V. 12. וַיְהוּדָה STADE holds this is a gloss because of its form. It should be וַעֲלֵי יְהוּדָה and such is the case in LXX Lucian which has καὶ ἐπὶ 'Ιουδαίαν. For כָּל־שִׁמְעוֹ LXX Vaticanus has παντὸς ἀκούοντος and LXX Lucian παντὸς ἀκούοντος ἀπτά. Evidently the reading here is wrong, and should be according to the Q^{re} שִׁמְעָה.¹ cf. 1Sam. 3:11; Jer. 19:3.

V. 13. For מָחָה וְהָפַךְ KLOSTERMANN, BENZINGER, and STADE read מָחָה, thus doing away with the two successive perfects. The use of the figure of a plummet is evidently meant for irony, because its use was primarily for building and not destruction.²

V. 16. From legendary sources we are informed that Isaiah suffered martyrdom under Manasseh.

V. 17. The usual conclusion-formula of the first redaction. The only departure is in וַתֵּצֵא אֶת־הָאִשָּׁרָה, which is an addition.

V. 18. וַיִּקְבֹּר בְּגִן־בֵּיתוֹ This gives the only clue as to the location of the garden of Uzza. It was probably very near the royal palace and Temple. 2 Chr. reads וַיִּקְבְּרוּ בֵּיתוֹ. This עֲזַיָּה may be another form for Uziah or Azariah.³ Hezekiah was the last king of Judah to be buried in the customary burial place. Was it some peculiar religious innovation of Manasseh, that changed the site of the royal burial place?⁴

¹ STADE, Kings, SBOT. p. 289.

¹ ibid. p. 289.

² Zech. 1:16; Amos 7:17; Isa. 34:11; Josh. 17:5, 4.

³ Cf. 2K. 15 wherein the names are frequently interchanged.

⁴ Cf. G. A. SMITH, Exp. Oct. 1905, p. 320. Perhaps it was this burial place which Ezekiel considered to be too near the Temple. Ezk. 13:7—9.

c) THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES.

The Books of Chronicles together with Ezra and Nehemiah were originally counted as one book in the Hebrew Canon. The Chronicles were designated under the name *דברי הימים* meaning "the events of days (times)" or "daily events", and it was very probable that the original title was "the events of the days of the Kings of Judah".¹ The original title as preserved by the Septuagint was "the things omitted concerning the Kings of Judah", showing they were considered as a supplement to the earlier historical books. The present title came into use by following a suggestion made by Jerome.²

The date and authorship of the Books is a matter of general agreement. The work displays all the evidences of late composition. The time most generally assigned is the latter part of the fourth century B. C. or circa 300.³ The author exhibits most of the characteristics of the priestly writers, and seems to have been officially connected with the Temple cultus. And in view of his particular interest in, and his numerous references to the Levites, and especially the Temple singers and musicians, many authorities consider the author as being a member of the musicians' guild of the Temple.⁴

The determination of the sources of the Books of Chronicles is a question of some uncertainty, for about one-half of the subject matter is totally foreign to the earlier sources of the Old Testament. The parallel sections to the Books of Samuel and Kings were probably taken directly from those books and not from earlier sources.⁵ Practically all of the more modern scholars are agreed that the Chronicler may have used a "Midrash" on the Books of Kings as a source

¹ CURTIS, Chronc. Intro. p. 1.

² Concerning the Books of Chronicles he said: "quod significantius Chronicon totius divinae historiae possumus appellare" Prol. galeatus.

³ BENZINGER, Chr. Intro. p. XV; KITTEL, Chr. Intro. p. XVf.; CURTIS, Chr. Intro. p. 6.

⁴ 1 Chr. 15 and 16; 2 Chr. 5:21f.; 20:19; 23:13; 29:13f.; 30:21; 34:12; 35:15.

⁵ Some authorities especially maintain that Chronicles and Kings were both compiled from common sources. KEIL, Bibl. Comm. zur Chron., Einleitung, Sec. 141.

for some of his additional matter.¹ The support for this is largely a result of a careful study of the way in which the Chronicler employed the material from Samuel and Kings, showing that his work was simply that of a copyist and not an independent writer. Thus our present Chronicles is nothing but a revised edition of earlier works, and the Chronicler merely a compiler of various "Midrashim" from different periods.²

The occasion for the Books of Chronicles was an outgrowth of a distinct set of conditions within the history of the Jewish people. The organization of the people was no longer a monarchy with a royal line of kings, but a municipality with ecclesiastical ideals. The words of the prophets were no longer the guiding principles, but instead, the laws of the Pentateuch and the ritualistic ceremonies of the Temple. And without the city of Jerusalem there were numerous religious organizations increasing in power and influence, and even asserting priority of origin over Jerusalem. The most important of these was the city of Samaria, an organization composed largely of the remnants from the former monarchies, and in part a few exiles from Jerusalem.³ The occasion for the Books of Chronicles thus became an effort to establish the priority of Jerusalem. It was an effort of necessity to prove beyond all question the antiquity of the Jerusalem Temple and cultus, and that by means of a thorough reconstruction of history from the beginning.⁴

¹ cf. STADE, *Gesch. I*, p. 84f.; KUENEN, *Die Bücher des AT. I*, p. 161; CORNILL, *AT. Einleitung*, p. 325; BENZINGER, *Die Bücher der Chron., Einleitung*; KITTEL, *Die Bücher der Chron., Einleitung*. In opposition to this view it is pointed out that the additional material of Chronicles is too homogeneous in style and expression to come from such an array of sources as alleged. The parading of so many authorities by the Chronicler was simply a plan to create the impression of certainty. cf. TORREY, *AJSL. XXV*, 1909, p. 192, 195; cf. also WELLHAUSEN, *Prol.* p. 219f.; S. R. DRIVER, *E. B. Col.* 768f.

² This is essentially the view of BENZINGER and also of KITTEL who attempts a classification of the various "Midrashim".

³ cf. 2 K. 24: 14f.; 25: 8—12, 26.

⁴ cf. TORREY, *AJSL. XXV*, 1909, p. 157f.

The Books of Chronicles are the most unique of all books in the Old Testament, because of their character and purpose. They are primarily books of church history with a historical framework for a background. Throughout the Books the motived purpose of the Chronicler predominates, especially in the treatment of particular characters and historical situations. David's piety reached unparalleled limits, because of his provisions for a Temple.¹ All the objectionable features of his life are minimized. And in the case of Solomon no mention is made of his conspiracy to gain the throne or the numerous idolatries of his last days.² The most pious kings possessed the greater number of warriors, for example, David had an army of one and one-half millions, Jehoshaphat over a million,³ Asa over one-half million, Abijah 400000, and Rehoboam only 180000.⁴ The importance of Jerusalem and Judah was intensified by detailed accounts of extended political relations with foreign nations.⁵ The political relations of the reigns of David and Solomon were especially extensive, and the simple account of the meeting of Josiah and Necho of Egypt is expanded from a plain notice in Kings to a narrative of the first rank.⁶

Further, the most striking evidences of a motived purpose

¹ For the building of the Temple David prepared 100000 talents of gold and one million talents of silver and various metals. 1 Chr. 22:14.

² At the dedication of the Temple Solomon made an offering of 22000 oxen and 120000 sheep. 2 Chr. 7:5; 5:6.

³ But this immense host seems to have been useless for an invasion from Eastern Palestine was thwarted by a providential intervention. 2 Chr. 20.

⁴ The Books of Kings have nothing good to say of either Rehoboam or Abijah, but the Chronicler exalts the former (2 Chr. 11) and the latter is made into a veritable prophet (2 Chr. 13). The sole reason for this seems to have been to emphasize the apostacy of the kings of Israel.

⁵ Evidently many of these accounts are entirely fictitious, because the small kingdom of Judah was too poor to warrant such invasions. Cf. the accounts of the victories gained by Abijah (2 Chr. 13:3—20), Asa (2 Chr. 14:8—14), and Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 20:1—30). In the mention of the Mennim, Arabians, and Hagrites some scholars have found apparent historical elements. Cf. WINCKLER, KAT.³, p. 142f.

⁶ 2 Chr. 35:20f.

in the Books of Chronicles are furnished by the expression of religious and theological ideals. The theological horizon of the Chronicler was entirely filled with two central religious conceptions, namely:—the providential protection of Judah and the direct and immediate retribution of sin. To the Chronicler misfortunes were the results of disobedience or apostasy, while successes were the rewards of godliness. For example, the ships of Jehoshaphat were lost and their loss was explained on the grounds that Jehoshaphat made an alliance with Ahaziah.¹ Joram and Joash both were smitten with dreadful diseases because of apostasy.² The misfortunes of Amaziah's reign, as for example the plundering of Jerusalem by Joash king of Israel, was explained by the king's introduction of Edomitic worship.³ The leprosy of Uzziah, one of the best kings of Judah, was accounted for by his usurpation of priestly functions in regard to sacrifice.⁴ The simple statement of Ahaz's apostasy and alliance with the Assyria in the Books of Kings is elaborated into a series of disasters for Judah. Ahaz became a captive of Syria and Israel after losing 120000 men in battle, and 200000 captives; and the land of Judah was harassed and oppressed by various other nations including Assyria.⁵ And Manasseh reigning for a half-century in comparative peace and prosperity was punished by an enforced captivity to Babylon, because of his apostasy to Assyrian cults.⁶

d) THE ANALYSIS OF 2 CHRONICLES 33:1—20.

In this section the verses 1—9 are practically, word for word, the same as in 2 Kings 21:1—9, and consequently except for minor changes, are of the same origin. The remaining verses, as the Books Kings make no attempt to relate any political events, are the Chronicler's records of several incidents in Manasseh's reign. The verses 10—13 relate Manasseh's Babylonian captivity, verse 14 Manasseh's building activities, and verses 15—17 Manasseh's religious reforms. The

¹ 2 Chr. 20:35 f.

² 2 Chr. 21 and 24.

³ 2 Chr. 25:14 f.

⁴ 2 Chr. 26:19.

⁵ 2 Chr. 28:5 f.

⁶ 2 Chr. 33:10—13.

conclusion-verses 18—20 are considerably expanded in comparison with the corresponding verses in Kings. This was a necessity in order to bring into harmony the general view with the new incidents in verses 10—17. The entire section, in point of origin, seems to rest wholly upon Kings and the work of the Chronicler. There is no evidence that any of the verses were taken from intermediate sources.¹

V. 1. The name תַּפְצִי־בָהּ, Manasseh's mother, is wanting. This omission also occurs in the case of Amon.²

V. 3. Instead of אֲבָד in Kings גָּנַץ is used. The LXX Lucian reads the same as Chronicles, while LXX Vaticanus reads κατέσπασεν. The plurals בָּעָלִים and אֲשֵׁרוֹת are used instead of בָּעַל and אֲשֵׁרָה as in Kings. The author of Kings may have had some one particular Baal in mind as the Tyrian Baal, because of the mention of Ahab (1K. 16:32). Evidently the Chronicler thought of separate Baalim for each place. בְּאֲשֵׁר עָשָׂה אֲחָז בְּמָלְכוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל is omitted, because the Chronicler makes no references to Ahab.

V. 4. Instead of יְהוָה־שְׁמִי לְעוֹלָם Kings read אֱלֹהִים אֶת־שְׁמִי. This reading is parallel to the one in v. 7.

V. 6. For וְהָעֵבֶר in Kings the improvement is made here by reading הָעֵבֶר הַזֶּה. בְּנֵי בִן־הַנֶּם is wanting in Kings. It is an addition of the Chronicler similar to the one in 2Chr. 28:3 concerning Ahaz. בִּן־הַנֶּם was located outside of the city's walls and probably to the southwest of Jerusalem. בָּשָׂף is also an addition by the Chronicler. The meaning of this verb is somewhat uncertain. Here it occurs as the Piel perfect form, but in all other cases as a participle used as a substantive.³ The meaning here is "he practiced sorcery". For the twelve times in which this occurs in the Old Testament the Syriac uses ܫܡܝܬ meaning "to be silent", hence some

¹ BENZINGER, Comm p. 128f.; KITTEL, Comm. '02, p. 170f.; and also Chronicles, SBOT. p. 47f.

² 2Chr. 33:21 and 2K. 21:19.

³ Deut. 18:10, "Sorcerer"; Exod. 22:17, "Sorceress"; cf. also Dan. 2:2; Mal. 3:5; Micah 5:12.

authorities claim that it had some connection with sorcery. Various other suggestions have been offered as to the meaning, for example, "to cut" referring to the art of witchcraft or "to be obscure, to be gloomy, distressed, and finally to be a suppliant, to seek something from the deity".¹

V. 7. **סמל** is used instead of **אשרה** showing that the Chronicler's conception of the Asherah was decidedly the conception of an idol or image. **אלהים** is used in place of **יהוה** in Kings. **לעולם** is used for **לעולם** in 2 Kings, which is evidently a scribal error for **לעולם**.²

V. 8. This verse has many small variations with the text in Kings. The most important versions agree with the text in Kings, thus showing that it is the more original text. **להקיר** is used for **להגיד**. BENZINGER suggests that the Chronicler here used a word more in keeping with his time, as **גוד** is not used in Chronicles. For **העמדת** 2 Kings read **נתתי**, which is also the reading of the LXX and Syriac. The reading in Kings is probably the best, as maintained by BENZINGER, KITTEL, and CURTIS. For **לאבתיכם** 2 Kings, and the majority of the versions have the third personal suffix. For **את כל** 2 Kings have **בכל**. For **לכל** 2 Kings have **ולכל** and **והחקים והמשפטים** is an addition by the Chronicler.

V. 9. **את-יהודה וישבי** from 2 Kings is wanting. **ירושלם** is expressed in 2 Kings by the use of the third personal suffix in **ויתעם**. For **ע** 2 Kings read **את-הקע**.

VV. 10—13. Evidently these verses are based on vv. 10—15 in 2 Kings, but important changes were necessary, because the Chronicler makes no references to the prophets, and also because of the introduction of Manasseh's captivity. Only the words **יהוה ירד** are repeated from 2 Kings.

V. 11. **בחוטים** The Revised English Version translates this "with chains", but objections are made that it is too modern. **חוט** usually means brier or bramble. The meaning here, as in Job 40:26, is with a hook or ring in the jaw.

¹ CURTIS, Chronicles, p. 496; E. B. Col. 2900.

² Cf. note by HAUPT in KITTEL, Chronicles, SBOT. p. 80.

However, the pointing is doubtful in Job, so probably it should be repointed here as **חָתִים** from **חָה** meaning ring or hook.¹ It is very significant that in the enforced captivity of Necho I nothing is said of "hooks".² CHEYNE suggests that **בְּחוּתִים** may be a corrupt form of **וְיָחוּ** where Manasseh was captured after attempting a flight from the Assyrians. Also that **אֲשֶׁר** may conceal the name of the king of Assyria **אֲשֶׁר בְּנֶהֱבֶל**.³ The Syriac reads **בְּחָתִים** instead of **בְּחוּתִים**, "with fetters of bronze or copper". The same word is used in connection with Jehoiachim's Babylonian captivity (2 Chr. 36:6).

V. 12. **וַיִּכְנַע** This also used in connection with Hezekiah's self-humiliation (2 Chr. 32:26). It is a word very often used by the Chronicler.⁴

V. 13. **וַיַּעֲתֶר לוֹ** is not found in the LXX Lucian version. Some versions which are later give the prayer of Manasseh.

V. 14. Evidently intended to mean an outer wall of some kind probably similar to the one ascribed to Hezekiah. Apparently it was intended as an additional means of fortification to the section of the city near the Temple. From a topographical standpoint the meaning of **מַעֲרֶבֶה לְגִיחוֹן** is uncertain, but the meaning given by BENZINGER is probably correct.⁵ **הַרְגִּים** According to Neh. 3:3; 12:39 its location was on the north wall.⁶

VV. 15—18. This reformatory activity of Manasseh seems to follow as a natural conclusion to verse 13, however an inconsistency prevails, for according to 2 Kings 23:6—12 Josiah cleansed the Temple of these very same objects of idolatry.

V. 15. The use of **סָמָל** as in v. 7 apparently refers to the **אֲשֶׁרָה**.

¹ Cf. Exod. 35:22; Ezek. 19:4, 9; 2 K. 19:28 **וְשִׁמְתִי חָתִי בְּאַפִּיקָה** is the same in Isa. 37:29.

² E. SCHRADER, KAT.² p. 371.

³ T. K. CHEYNE, E. B. Col. 2927.

⁴ 2 Chr. 33:23; 34:27; 36:12.

⁵ KAUTZSCH translates "nach Westen, nach dem Gichon". BENZINGER; "Westwärts vom Gichon", Comm. p. 128 f.

⁶ GUTHE, PRE,³ VIII, 680, 11 f.; GUTHE, Gesch. p. 227; Zeph. 1:10.

V. 16. A majority of the Mss. read וִיכֶן, but about 25 Mss. read וִיכֶן, which is a better form.¹

V. 17. This is one of the usual qualifying statements of the Chronicler, and in this case it was intended to offset the evident permanency of idolatry during the time of Manasseh. The use of אָבָל as adversative is late Hebrew and often used by the Chronicler.²

VV. 18 and 19. מְלָכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל is omitted in LXX. For חֲזָיו BUDDE suggests חֲזָיו, which is accepted by BENZINGER, CURTIS, KAUTZSCH, and TORREY.³ The text is in bad condition. Jerome used it as a proper noun as in the Massoretic text. The Syriac reads סֵפֵי נְבִיִּים. These "seers" apparently were considered the historians of Manasseh's reign.

V. 20. וַיִּקְבְּרוּהוּ בֵיתוֹ This is a mistake and should be corrected to read according to 2 K. 21:18, by the addition of בְּגֶן, "they buried him in the garden of his house". This is accepted by KLOSTERMANN, KITTEL, BENZINGER, and CURTIS. Great importance was attached to burial places by the Hebrews⁴, and especially by the Chronicler.⁵

(2) THE INDIRECT BIBLICAL SOURCES.

a) THE PROPHETS.

The great value of the prophetical writings consists in their faithful reproduction of the social and religious conditions of different periods. In many cases, they are the only records concerning the effects of foreign influence upon the people of Palestine. The prophets, whose work and prophecies bear a close relation to our period under consideration, are

¹ KITTEL, Chronicles, SBOT. p. 81.

² 2 Chr. 1:4; 19:3; 33:17; Ezra 10:13.

³ ZAW. 1892, p. 38.

⁴ BENZINGER, E. B. Col. 5131.

⁵ According to the Books of Kings all the kings of Judah until Manasseh's time were buried in the usual burial place, but the Chronicler intentionally refused burial to Jehoram (2 Chr. 21:20), Joash (2 Chr. 24:25), Uzziah (2 Chr. 26:23), and Ahaz (2 Chr. 28:27) in the royal burial place.

Isaiah (740—691)¹, Micah (710)², Zephaniah (630)³, Nahum (610)⁴, Habbakuk (605)⁵, Jeremiah (621—586)⁶, and Ezekiel (592—570).⁷

¹ The Book of Isaiah is probably one of the most composite books in the Hebrew literature. The genuine prophecies of Isaiah are only to be found within the first general division of the Book, in Chaps. 1—39. But even in this section there are several important passages of exilic and post-exilic origin. For example, 13 : 2—14 : 23; 21 : 1—10, 34, 35, and 36—39 which are practically the same as 2 K. 18—20 (cf. J. MEINHOLD, *Die Jesaja-erzählungen*).

² Micah was apparently a contemporary of Isaiah. The original parts of the Book of Micah are only to be found within the first three chapters. The assignment of the remaining chapters has been a matter of great uncertainty. EWALD was the first to assign Chaps. 6 and 7 to the reign of Manasseh. WELLHAUSEN considered only Chaps. 6 and 7 : 1—6 as belonging to Manasseh's time. STADE assigned 6 : 1—16 and 7 : 1—6 to Manasseh's reign (cf. E. B. Col. 3068 also CORNILL, *Prophetismus*, p. 76 f.). The results of a more recent criticism seem to favor a much later date, especially in regard to 7 : 1—6 which is considered as parallel to Trito-Isaiah and Malachi (cf. MARTI, *Dodekapropheton* p. 296).

³ Zephaniah's prophetic activity must be placed within the period of 640—625 B. C., the period reaching from the death of Manasseh to the beginnings of Josiah's reforms. His prophecies, as contained within the first two Chaps., are invaluable testimonies of the conditions of Manasseh's time.

⁴ Nahum's prophecies are generally determined by his references to the Fall of Thebes in 663 and the Fall of Nineveh in 607—6. In view of the reference to Thebes several scholars have fixed the date of Nahum's prophecies shortly after 663, but there seems to be no reason against the possibility of this particular prophecy being delivered several decades later (cf. E. MEYER, *Gesch. Egyptens*, p. 354). WINCKLER finds a most suitable time during the revolution of Samassumukin in 652—648 (cf. *AT. Untersuchung*, P. 124, *Gesch. Israels* I p. 101). BUDDE maintains that there was no suitable occasion for these prophecies until after the death of Ashurbanipal in 626 (cf. E. B. Col. 3259; *Gesch. der Altheb. Lit.* p. 89). The majority are agreed that the prophecies find their most appropriate occasion about 610, not many years removed from the Fall of Nineveh (cf. MARTI, *Comm.* p. 305).

⁵ The value of the short prophecies of Habbakuk as a source for our problem is very limited, because the occasion for their delivery was principally the invasion of Judah by the Chaldeans, followed closely by the ravages of the Scythians in 630. The date of the prophecies most certainly must be placed after 621. BUDDE favors the year 615, while DUHM is in-

b) THE SPECIAL SECTIONS.

The special sections bearing indirectly upon our problem are the historical descriptions of the reigns of Hezekiah, Amon, and Josiah, as contained in the Books of Kings¹ and

clined to place the entire work or prophecies of Habbakuk in the Greek period. However, several authorities claim that portions of the first chapter find their most appropriate setting in the historical situations immediately following the Fall of Nineveh, or in 605 (cf. MARTI, *Comm.* p. 327, NOWACK, *Comm.* p. 250 f.).

⁶ The particular value of the writings of Jeremiah lies in the fulness of his references to Jerusalem, and his portrayal of the religious conditions of his times. After the failure of many of the Deuteronomic reforms in 608, many of the religious practices of the preceding periods were revived thus furnishing us with valuable indications of the situations in Manasseh's time. As in the case of Isaiah the Book of Jeremiah has suffered many revisions. The passages which come from Jeremiah are extremely few. DUHM shows that out of the 1350 verses of the Hebrew text only 280 verses can be ascribed to Jeremiah, 220 to the Book of Baruch, and the remainder to much later sources (cf. JEREMIA, KHC. *Einleitung* p. XVI). In general the chapters 46—52 are admitted to be late in origin. The majority of the older passages are to be found within the first 25 chapters.

⁷ The greatest value of Ezekiel's testimony lies in the fact that many of the pre-exilic cults of an idolatrous nature were prevalent in his time and persisted in finding patronage among the exiles. And further his plans for reform were constructed especially in regard to the Temple and its cultus, so as to make the abuses of pre-exilic days a future impossibility. The Book, unlike the majority in the Old Testament, is practically all the work of the prophet (cf. C. H. Toy, *Ezekiel*, SBOT, A. BERTHOLET, *Hesekiel*, p. XIX f.).

¹ 2 K. 18—20 concerning Hezekiah's reign contains good examples of all the different redactional features of Kings. In Chap. 18 vv. 1—3, 5—7, 12a, 13a are assigned to the first redactor and vv. 14—16 to the Annals. STADE considers vv. 4, 8, 12b, as of late and doubtful origin, but v. 9 is assigned to the first redaction. KITTEL assigns vv. 4, 9a, 11 to the Annals, v. 12b to the first redaction, and v. 9b to a later hand. The remaining passages with the exception 20 : 20, 21 are all assigned to late sources as the legends and biographies of the prophets. 2 K. 21 : 19—23 : 30 concerning Amon and Josiah, like all other well-known sections, has suffered much at the hands of later writers. 2 K. 21 : 19—26 on Amon is entirely a product of the Deuteronomic redactions. The passages relative to Josiah and his reforms have great value for our problem, because they are based upon much earlier sources than 2 K. 21 : 1 f. vv. 22 : 1 and 2 and 23 : 28 come from the earlier redactor, while 23 : 26, 27 from the later redactor. In

Chronicles¹, and the later writings of the Jahwist and Elohist², and the work of the Deuteronomists³.

2) THE NON-BIBLICAL SOURCES.

(1) THE BABYLONIAN-ASSYRIAN.

The reign of Manasseh came in close contact with three very important kings of Assyria, Sennacherib (705—681), Esarhaddon (681—668), and Ashurbanipal (668—626). All

addition STADE assigns vv. 23 : 24, 25, 28—30 to the Annals. The important verses in Chap. 23 resting upon early sources such as the Annals are vv. 1—4a, 6, 7a, 8a, 11, 12a, 13, 15, 21—23. In addition STADE assigns vv. 9, 14b, 19, 20 to the older sources. BENZINGER assigns only vv. 12b, 24, 25 in addition. KITTEL assigns vv. 6—11, 24—25a entirely to earlier sources.

¹ The purpose of the Chronicler is very appropriately illustrated in his treatment of the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah. The text in Kings is not followed except in a few of the introductory verses. In view of some of the more recent work upon the text of Chronicles the sources for the additional material of the Chronicler is rather uncertain. CURTIS considers all the extra material relative to Hezekiah and Josiah as the work of the Chronicler, while KITTEL and BENZINGER have drawn careful distinctions between the work of the Chronicler and various intermediate sources.

² The determination of the origin of the late or secondary passages of J and E is still a problem of some magnitude. The language and the thought of the majority of these secondary passages indicate the influence of the eight century prophets, and thus must be placed within the period following 750 B. C. Some authorities are inclined to place them as late as 650. The most important section of the later E narratives is the Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20 : 22—23 : 30). The laws were probably collected during the latter half of Hezekiah's reign (not in Jerusalem), and represented a reaction of the native element of Palestine against foreign influence. The question as to when the J and E narratives were united cannot be ascertained with any great certainty. There are a few instances which seem to show that the work may have been completed before the Deuteronomic reforms, but the judgements expressed agree so closely with the spirit of the Deuteronomic redactors that it cannot be placed very far from the year of 621.

³ The work of the Deuteronomists as represented in the Book of Deuteronomy is very important for the consideration of Manasseh's time. Practically all authorities are agreed that the more original parts of the Book are contained within the Chaps. 12—26 and possibly Chap. 28. As to the origin of these sections some authorities find their beginnings as far

three of these monarchs were obliged to give a great deal of attention in a military way to the "western lands". And it is from their inscriptions respecting these expeditions, that we derive our most valuable information.¹

(2) THE EGYPTIAN.

The sources from Egyptian history are extremely meagre. The most important factors, relative to Palestine, were the rule of the Ethiopian Dynasty and the Assyrian conquests. The latter, however, are more completely recorded from the Assyrian side. In addition there is one account from traditional sources bearing close relations to our problem, namely: the rout of Sennacherib's army. This tradition from the Egyptian traditions is recorded by Herodotus (II, 141) about 425 B. C. or nearly 275 years after the event occurred.

(3) THE JEWISH.

There are several references to Manasseh in the great body of Jewish tradition as preserved in the Talmud. The Jerusalem Talmud (Sanhedrin X, 2) mentions Manasseh together with Ahab and Jeroboam as having no share in the future world. Manasseh's captivity is understood as an actual fact, and his deliverance and restoration to his kingdom follow as a result of his repentance. This particular section of the Talmud deals with legal questions and adjustments, and originated in the great mass of Jewish exegetical literature. The period of redaction and compilation was between the second and third centuries A. D. The sections VII—XI are espe-

back as the days of Hezekiah. The support for these suppositions has been considerably weakened by some of the more recent criticism, wherein it is urged that the style of the Deuteronomic writers is too characteristic to permit of earlier revisions than 621.

¹ Cf. *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek* herausgegeben von E. SCHRADER, Bd. II-*Texte des neuassyrischen Reiches*. It is a very peculiar coincidence that no reliable records exist for the last years of both Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal. The term *Baylonian-Assyrian* seems to be the best designation for the great stream of influences from the Mesopotamian valley, for the religious influences were essentially Babylonian and the political Assyrian.

cially late in origin and are admittedly the secondary portions of the work.¹

The Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 103b) mentions Manasseh in somewhat different relations. The three wicked kings are considered to be Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon. Ahaz is described as doing away with sacrifices, Manasseh destroying the altar, and Amon desecrating its location. Ahaz sealed up the scrolls of the law, Manasseh tore out the divine name, and Amon destroyed the documents themselves. Ahaz allowed the practice of incest, Manasseh committed it himself, and Amon practiced unparalleled atrocities. As in the case of the Jerusalem Talmud these elements are also of a very late origin. Their present position in the Talmud was a result of a series of redactions extending from the second to the sixth centuries A. D.²

(4) THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN.

The sources from this class are found within the Old Testament Apocrypha. The writings are of late composition and have been held as non-canonical by the Christian church.

a) THE PRAYER OF MANASSEH.³

The prayer of Manasseh is not found in any form among the Jewish traditional sources.⁴ The extant copies of the prayer are all found in Greek versions. The form found in the Apostolic Constitutions (2:22) probably being the oldest. It is preserved in many of the Septuagint manuscripts of the Old Testament. Some of these versions place it among the Psalms, others in the Canticles, and still others at the end of Chronicles.

The prayer together with an account of Manasseh's capt-

¹ Cf. GUSTAV HÖLSCHER, *Die Mischna-tractate "Sanhedrin" und "Makot"*, 1910, pp. 104, 5; 14 f.; 28; 32 f.; H. L. STRACK, *Einleitung in den Talmud*, 1908, p. 12, 63.

² Cf. H. L. STRACK, *Einleitung in den Talmud*, 1908, p. 12, 67 f.

³ E. KAUTZSCH, *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des AT.* 1900 I p. 16.

⁴ *Jewish Encyclopedia* Vol. VIII p. 282.

ivity is used in the Apostolic Constitutions (2:22) as an instructive lesson for church officials. The story recounts the numerous sins of Manasseh and his enforced captivity in Babylon. And then describes his punishments while in prison, wherein he was obliged to live on a limited diet of bread made from bran and water and mixed with vinegar. Finally in the midst of the greatest afflictions he offered this prayer and there appeared a flame of fire about him and his fetters were melted away. Later on he was restored to Jerusalem and the affairs of his kingdom.

The exact date of the composition and the author of this prayer are unknown. The prayer is written in such general terms, and except for the title, it would apply to almost any set of conditions. The prayer of Jonah (Jonah 2:1f.) and the prayer of the three men in the fiery furnace¹ are good examples of similar compositions. The fact that the prayer is only found in the Greek versions has led many to consider it purely a Hellenistic composition of comparatively late origin. Budde was the first one to suggest that the present Greek versions are based upon a Hebrew original.² This view is very possible, because the author was evidently a Jew.³ However, it is possible that a Jew may have written in Greek, as for example during one of the great periods of Greek influence. The date of composition most assuredly must be placed after the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. The first historical and literary reference to this composition was made by Julius Africanus (221 A. D.).⁴

b) THE MARTYRDOM OF ISAIAH.⁵

The account describes the prophet as living in exile in the mountains together with a few faithful followers, because

¹ cf. E. KAUTZSCH, *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des AT.* 1900 II p. 181 f.

² BUDDE, *ZAW.* 1892, p. 39 f.

³ cf. A. BERTHOLET, *Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen*, 1909, p. 384.

⁴ cf. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. VIII p. 281.

⁵ E. KAUTZSCH, *Die Apokryphen u. Pseudepigraphen d. AT.* 1900 p. 124 f.

of the terrible persecutions of King Manasseh in Jerusalem. Finally the prophet was falsely accused, and because of his prophecies concerning Jerusalem, he was sawn asunder in the trunk of a tree by the order of Manasseh.¹

The earliest extant version of this story comes to us from an Ethiopian version dating from the fifth to the seventh centuries A. D. It is very probable that the original text was in the Hebrew and hence somewhat earlier in origin.² It is highly improbable that any historical basis for this story can be found, because no mention of it is made in the section on the prophets in Kings (2K. 21:10—15), or in Chronicles, or in Ecclesiasticus (48:22—25). The sole motive for the story is the general recognition of Manasseh's despotism (2K. 21:16).

c) THE BOOK OF BARUCH, 64:1f.³

This small passage consists of a general condemnation of the sins of Manasseh's reign. It is parallel to the sentence pronounced upon Manasseh in the Talmud (Sanhedrin X, 2). The date of the composition must be placed after 70 A. D., because of its peculiar apocalyptic character. In fact it is so late in origin that it is a question whether or not the original was in Hebrew or Greek.⁴

¹ Cf. A. BERTHOLET, *Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen* 1909, p. 399. Cf. Hebrews 11:37. The descriptions in the Jewish traditions agree substantially with this version. In the Babylonian Talmud (Yeb. 49b) it is related that Manasseh had pointed out some of Isaiah's self-contradictions, and the prophet despairing of pleasing Manasseh uttered the "Unpronounceable Name" wherewith a cedar opened and he disappeared within its trunk. By Manasseh's order the tree was sawn asunder thus causing Isaiah's death. In Sanhedrin X it is related that Isaiah fled because of Manasseh's persecutions and hid in a cedar tree, but his presence was betrayed by the fringes of his garments. The tree was sawn asunder, which resulted in the prophet's death.

² Cf. A. BERTHOLET, *Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen* 1909, p. 398.

³ E. KAUTZSCH, *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des AT.* 1900, I p. 436.

⁴ Cf. A. A. BEVAN, *E. B. Col.* 492 f.

d) THE BOOK OF TOBIT, 14:10.¹

The reference to Manasseh reads: "Manasseh displayed repentance and was delivered out of the snares of death". The Book of Tobit represents a bit of family history from the times of the Jewish Dispersion. Apparently the first elements of the story were written before the days of the Herodian Temple, 30 B. C.² This particular reference to Manasseh is uncertain and doubtful in origin, because it is not found in all the recensions of the Book.³

III.

THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH AND ITS POLITICAL RELATIONS IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY B. C.

The seventh century B. C. was a period of changes and surprises for the ancient world. The forepart of the century witnessed Assyria gradually rising to the height of her imperial powers, for with the capture of Memphis (670) under Esarhaddon, Western Asia for the first time since the fifteenth century was placed under one political power.⁴ And during the short time that the theater of war was transferred from Mesopotamia and Syria to the Valley of the Nile, the Assyrian arms reached their widest bounds. However, towards the end of the century seeds of decay and decline developed, and finally with the fall of Nineveh in 607—6 the once dreaded and hated of enemies disappeared. On the other hand at the

¹ E. KAUTZSCH, *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des AT.* 1900, I p. 146.

² A. BERTHOLET, *Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen* 1909, p. 406. W. ERBT, *E. B. Col.* p. 5110 f.

³ Cf. WELLHAUSEN, *Prol.*, p. 166, note.

⁴ The Assyrian system of provincial rule can hardly be designated as a centralized form of government, because generally the conquered province was allowed to retain its king. The first centralized form of government appeared with the Persians.

beginning of the century Egypt, under the energetic Ethiopian Dynasty, was powerful enough to be a factor in the contest for the world's supremacy. After a short period of submission to Assyria once more the power of Egypt came to the front and towards the close of the century began to play a leading part in the world's politics.

1) THE INTERNAL CONDITIONS OF THE JUDEAN STATE.

The internal conditions of the Judean state were largely an outgrowth of the general political situation. For many generations the small kingdom of Judah remained in the background as far as political relations of great importance were concerned. But with the Fall of Damascus (732), and Samaria (721) Judah entered upon a new epoch.¹ She was obliged to stand alone as she was no longer surrounded and protected by powerful opponents to the approaching Assyrians. At last the forces of Assyria could reach Judah unhindered for indeed she was "as a booth in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers" (Isa. 1:8). So confronted and frequently patriotic enough not to submit, it was natural that Judah sought for aid from outside powers. The one remaining power of importance in the West was Egypt, whose pretensions and promises were steadily increasing. Thus most naturally there grew up within the state of Judah a strong party favoring an Egyptian alliance. That steps were taken to form such an alliance is clearly implied in numerous passages in Isaiah, wherein the indications of an exchange of embassies are most evident.²

¹ WELHAUSEN, *Gesch.* p. 121 f. In fact, until the time of the Assyrians Judah's political relations were not large. The political relations of Solomon's reign were largely the result of idealization, especially in the case of the Chronicler. Cf. T. K. CHEYNE, *E. B. Col.* 4683 f. However, we must not conclude that Judah failed entirely to pass through important developments. Cf. G. A. SMITH, *Exp. July* 1905, p. 1 f.

² Isa. 30: 1—3; 18: 1, 2, 4, cf. MARTI, *Jes.* p. 151 f. CHEYNE, *Isa.* S. B. O. T. p. 150. Both MARTI and CHEYNE place the formation of the

On the other hand there were forces in the Judean state which opposed an Egyptian alliance. This opposition was apparent in two forms, the one being a progressive party favoring an alliance with Assyria, and the other in the exponents of Jahwe's religion, especially the prophets. The purpose of the Assyrian party was not necessarily peace with a powerful enemy, but more probably a certain inclination towards foreign customs and culture.¹ The position of the prophets or religious party was primarily a neutral position. They opposed all relations with foreigners, because alliances with foreign nations were inconsistent with their religious standards.

The presence of these forces of progression and opposition within the Judean state was one indication of the vitality of the nation. That Judah was often a party to revolt is evident from the annals of Sargon and Sennacherib.² We have no authentic records of revolts during the reign of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, but it is highly improbable that Judah suddenly became a passive factor in western politics.³ The possibility of a further expedition against Palestine in the reign of Sennacherib seems to indicate an insubmissive spirit. And very probably revolts, if there were any in the later portions of Manasseh's reign, were put down with a strong hand (2K. 21:16).

alliance about 704 B. C. Several authorities have suggested that Palestine felt under obligations to Egypt because of help received in the past in the form of horses and chariots Isa. 30 : 16; 31 : 1. Cf. O. C. WHITEHOUSE, E. B. Col. 726.

¹ BENZINGER, *Gesch.*, p. 102.

² In 713 Judah in company with Edom and the Philistine cities arose in rebellion against Assyria. Judah escaped punishment, but Ashdod was destroyed (711). The most determined revolt occurred in 701, wherein Jerusalem escaped, but the land of Judah was severely punished.

³ In view of this, many authorities see in the revolution of Samassumukin, king of Babylon, the very best conditions for revolt in Palestine. E. SCHRADER, *KAT.*², p. 367 f.; WINCKLER, *Gesch.* I, p. 99. The grounds for this supposition are very probable as the rebellion succeeded in causing disturbances in Babylonia, Chaldea, Elam, Edom, and Phoenicia.

2) THE EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE JUDEAN STATE.

(1) THE LOCAL RELATIONS.

The local relations of the kingdom of Judah during the seventh century were largely with the Assyrian settlers in Samaria, the kingdoms of Ammon, Moab, and Edom, and the confederacies of the Philistine and Phoenician cities. That these relations were important, we have no reason to doubt, for the adjustment of boundaries and trade routes alone, after the Fall of Samaria (721), must have introduced many new factors into the local situations.

The colonization of conquered lands was one of the well-recognized policies of the Assyrian empire. In the case of Samaria we have direct evidences of at least two separate colonizations. One occurred during the reign of Sargon between 721 and 705, and the other under Ashurbanipal from 668 B. C. and following.¹ The mention of the name Osnapper is probably meant for Ashurbanipal, because of the style of the epithets in Ezra 4:2.² Esarhaddon in Ezra 4:2 is probably a scribe's addition based on 2K 17:24, wherein the king of Assyria is mentioned.³

From the very earliest time the people of Israel were closely associated with the kindred nations of Ammon, Moab, and Edom. As in the case of Judah, Ammon was a tributary kingdom under Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. The conditions following the captivity of the Eastern Palestinian tribes in 734 and the Fall of Samaria seem to warrant the conclusion that much of the territory of the former kingdom of Israel was occupied by the people of Ammon.⁴ The kingdom of

¹ 2 K. 17:24—41; Ezra 4:2, 8—10.

² WINCKLER, A. T. *Untersuchung*, p. 97 f.

³ Cf. A. E. COWLEY, E. B. col. 4257.

⁴ The numerous references to the "reproach" of the people of Ammon are all very late passages directly under a special religious influence. Cf. Jer. 49:1; 2:26; Zeph. 2:8—11; 2 K. 24:2; Ezek. 21:28 f. Cf. T. K. CHEYNE, E. B. Col. 143.

Ammon was likewise a tributary province under Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. It took a prominent part with Edom in the rebellion of 652—648.¹ It seems that after the Fall of Samaria the bitter hatred of the people of Moab for Israel was transferred to Judah. The kingdom of Edom was tributary to Assyria during the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal.² There is some direct evidence that a spirit of enmity also existed between Edom and Judah. Friendly relations were not helped, to say the least, when Rezin, king of Damascus in the days of Ahaz restored the ancient port of Elath to the Edomites.³ The Deuteronomic code clearly taught that Judah had no right to this territory and that friendly relations should be encouraged.⁴

The confederacy of the Philistine cities was probably an unimportant factor during the greater part of Manasseh's reign. During the days of Sargon and Sennacherib the cities were often parties to revolt against Assyrian rule, but their power was severely crippled in 711, again in 701, and probably in 690. The position of these cities upon the plains was one of the conditions, which made it possible for the Assyrian forces to mete out a sudden and terrible punishment. The result of the great series of campaigns against Egypt was to completely sever the ties of the confederacy.

On the other hand the cities of Phoenicia continued to exert considerable influence throughout the days of Manasseh. The political power of Phoenicia was largely in the hands of the cities of Tyre and Sidon, the two most influential cities of Phoenicia. The chief influence of these cities was not political but commercial, and because of their great wealth and commercial importance their possession was eagerly sought for by the Assyrians. Sidon revolted in 678 and in 677—76 the city was completely destroyed and the people treated in a most cruel manner. The city of Tyre was favored by a situ-

¹ G. A. SMITH, *Exp.* Oct. 1905 p. 311.

² K. B. II, 149, 239, 291.

³ Cf. 2 K. 16 : 6 and read "Edom" with LXX. Cf. 2 Chron. 28 : 17.

⁴ Cf. Deut. 23 : 7 f. Also Deut. 2 : 5—8; Ps. 60 : 8—11; Ps. 108 : 8—11.

ation which was peculiarly suited to resisting attacks from the land, and because of this fact it was often a party to revolt. Both Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal employed extraordinary means to capture the stronghold, but they were only successful in exacting tribute. Throughout the reign of Manasseh, especially during the second period, Tyre probably came into close relations to Judah, as it was the natural outlet for the greater part of the transit trade of Palestine.

(2) THE FOREIGN RELATIONS.

The most important relations of Judah were the relations with the great powers. This was rendered possible largely because of the geographical situation of Judah, a situation of supreme importance in the furtherance of military ambitions and exploits. This strategetic situation of Palestine cannot be over-estimated, as it was the only route for trade between the east and west, which lay in a fertile region. Thus Judah became a "buffer" state, first under the control of one power and then another. The greatest political centers which exerted influences upon Judah were Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt.¹

a) ASSYRIA.

The seventh century opened during the years of the New Assyrian Period (745—626) the period of Assyria's greatest territorial expansions, military achievements, and cultural developments. In 705 B. C. Sargon, one of the empire's greatest men and leaders, died. Sennacherib (705—681) followed upon the throne, pledged from the very first under the Assyrian military party, whose particular aim was opposition to the precedence of Babylon. He was obliged to undertake

¹ The unique situation of the city of Babylon during the seventh century will hardly warrant us in calling it a political power as in the case of Assyria. The mention of Chaldea situated to the south of Babylon on the seaboard must not be confused with Babylon even though Merodach Baladan (2 K. 20 : 12 f.) was living in Babylon for a short time. The nation of Chaldea exercised no further influence until after the death of Ashurbanipal (626), when Nabopolassar gained the throne of Babylon.

an expedition against Palestine in 701 to quell a rebellion among his tributary provinces. The revolt was headed by Luli (Eluleus), king of Tyre and Sidon, who had charge of the forces in the north; and Hezekiah of Judah, who was in command in the south.¹ The rebellion was put under with a great exhibition of power, and the Egyptians who were coming to the aid of the Syrian forces, were repulsed at the battle of Eltekah.² The land of Judah was devastated and thousands of its inhabitants taken captive. And the city of Jerusalem was blockaded but not captured, as the Assyrians were obliged to withdraw because of conditions in the Mesopotamian valley. These disturbances proved to be of such a violent nature, that finally Sennacherib needlessly destroyed Babylon in 689. The course of events during the remaining years of Sennacherib's reign are veiled in obscurity. The apparent incompleteness of the campaign of 701 seems to presuppose another expedition against Palestine, but the historical evidences for it are not all that could be desired.

Sennacherib was followed by Esarhaddon (681—668), whose policy was a direct opposite of that of his predecessors. From the very beginning of his reign he began to rebuild the city of Babylon and to restore it to its former position of influence. Esarhaddon exhibited many weak characteristics, but in spite of their presence, he was successful in many ways. In 678 the king of Sidon together with several Syrian nations

¹ Hezekiah was well supported by neighbouring peoples as a body of Arabian mercenaries was among his forces. Cf. WEBER, *Der Alte Orient*, 1904, Heft 3, p. 10; G. A. SMITH, *Exp. Sept.* 1905, p. 216.

² The location of this place is uncertain, but most probably it was situated upon the Philistine plain, where the conditions were more suitable for great military activities. Until recent years the forces defeated by Sennacherib were supposed to have been Egyptians. WINCKLER maintains, that Egypt was not strong enough to interfere in Palestine until after 691, and that the opponents of Sennacherib were from Northern Arabia. It is evident that various forces were present, but there is no good reason to deny the presence of Egyptian troops as well. Sennacherib designated his opponents as "the bowmen, chariots, and horses of the king of Melukhkha", and "the king" or "kings of Musri" cf. G. A. SMITH, *Exp. Sept.* 1905, p. 216 f.

revolted, evidently after being influenced by Tirhakah of Egypt. In 677—6 Esarhaddon displayed his vengeance by destroying the city and treating its inhabitants in a most barbarous manner. Immediately following this dreadful example of cruelty, Esarhaddon received the homage of twenty-two kings of Palestine and Syria, one of whom was Manasseh. In 676 an expedition was made against Egypt, but most probably suffered defeat.¹ However in 671—70 a successful expedition was made into Egypt and Tirhakah was forced to retreat southwards. As a tributary king of Assyria Manasseh was obliged to furnish his quota of troops. Shortly after this event the city of Tyre was besieged and forced to pay tribute, but not captured.² Because of the unstable conditions in Egypt another expedition was undertaken in 668, but Esarhaddon died in the course of its march.

Esarhaddon was succeeded by Ashurbanipal (668—626), who immediately completed the expedition against Egypt. The conquered territory was placed under a rigid form of provincial rule, but conditions were so unsettled that another expedition was necessary in 663. This expedition penetrated as far as the city of Thebes, and Tanut Amon, son of Tirhakah, was signally defeated, thus ending the rule of the Ethiopian Dynasty in Egypt. Again it was necessary for Manasseh to furnish "men and ships in addition to the customary tribute".³ After this second expedition of Ashurbanipal an attempt was made to capture Tyre, but the effort failed in its main purpose.⁴ This attempt against the city of Tyre

¹ WINCKLER, KAT. 3, p. 88.

² cf. LEHMANN-HAUPT, *Gesch.* p. 29, 127. The representations of Esarhaddon leading Baal, king of Tyre, captive, do not represent actual occurrences for Tyre was not captured. Cf. PIETSCHMANN, *Gesch. d. Phoenizier*; p. 303.

³ Cf. L. W. KING, E. B. col. 372 f.; G. A. SMITH, *Exp.* Oct. 1905, p. 310. The capture of Thebes probably furnished great amounts of booty, for Ashurbanipal was reported as recording "with full hands I safely returned to Nineveh the city of my rule" E. B. col. 373; Nahum 3 : 8 f.

⁴ The city was not captured but sufficient power was exercised so that Tyre was compelled to pay tribute. This was shown by the submission of several cities to the north of Tyre. Cf. L. W. KING, E. B. col. 374.

marked the last offensive movement of Assyria of importance in Palestine.¹ The remaining years of Ashurbanipal, except for serious internal dissensions, seem to have been devoted more to building activities and cultural developments.

The last years (626—607) of the Assyrian Empire are obscured in darkness, but evidently the decline of the nation was rapid and the loss of its great power noticeable, especially in regard to the western provinces. For the time being Judah was practically left to govern itself and to develop its more native elements. The rule of the Assyrians in the far West, Egypt in particular, was of short duration and practically the only result achieved was the deliverance of Egypt from the rule of the Ethiopian Dynasty.² The general Assyrian policy of extermination of all border nations was most probably one of the factors in her ultimate downfall, as there were no barriers against the great hordes of incoming races, especially the Scythians.

b) BABYLON.

Running almost parallel, and for the most part included within the history of Assyria, we have the peculiar situation of the city of Babylon. Shortly before the opening of the seventh century we find that extremely resourceful man, Merodach Baladan (721—710, 704) planning in every possible way to outwit the Assyrians, and to establish his claims to kingship in Babylon. After many changes in the governing head of Babylon, Sennacherib placed one of his own sons upon the throne (699—94), but almost immediately the city was the center of various uprisings. Finally tired of being concerned with a troublesome enemy and a perplexing problem, Sennacherib needlessly destroyed the ancient city in 689.

¹ The Assyrian forces appear to have made an expedition against Arabia shortly after the end of the revolution of Samassumukin in 647. The purpose of the expedition evidently was to punish the participants in the revolution. There is no evidence that the expedition came in close touch with Judah, as the districts mentioned were in Eastern Palestine. Cf. E. B. col. 374 f.; GUTHE, *Gesch.* p. 227.

² LEHMANN-HAUPT, *Gesch.* p. 129.

For the period of nine years the site of the city lay in ruins until the death of Sennacherib (681), when a new Assyrian policy in the person of Esarhaddon (681—668) effected a gradual restoration and rebuilding of Babylon.

However with the opening of the reign of Ashurbanipal (668—626), a new order of affairs developed with respect to Babylon. Before Esarhaddon died, he made provisions for the government of Babylon by appointing one of his sons, Samassumukin, as viceroy. This plan of joint rulership worked splendidly for fifteen years, but disturbing elements were bound to enter. Samassumukin was not satisfied with a partnership rule; so he conceived the plan of stirring up revolts against Assyrian rule in various parts of the Empire, especially in Elam, Arabia, the West, and presumably in Palestine.¹ Samassumukin was not successful in his ultimate object, but before he was deposed he was the cause in provoking so many uprisings and internal disturbances, that they finally proved to be some of the causes for weakening the power of the Assyrian empire. Thereafter Ashurbanipal assumed the viceroyship of Babylon until the time of his death (626). After 626 the growing power of the Chaldeans assumed complete control of Babylon in person of Nabopolassar (626).

c) EGYPT.

The opening of the seventh century found the land of Egypt once more, after many years and generations of dormancy, the center of a revival of power and aggression under the leadership of the Ethiopian Dynasty. Tirhakah, a son of Kashta, from this dynasty was appointed as viceroy of Lower Egypt in 699² and remained as such until 691, when he gained complete control of the throne. During his reign (691—668) attempts were made to gain a foothold in Palestine, but his many promises to the small kingdoms of that land remained unfulfilled (Isa 30:7), although he was a factor in Sennacherib's withdrawal in 690. The revolt of Sidon in

¹ Cf. E. SCHRADER, KAT², 367 f.

² PETRIE, Israel and Egypt, p. 77.

678f. was probably due to the interference of Tirhakah in Syrian politics. In 671—70 Egypt was invaded by the Assyrians and Memphis loosed of its treasures. Tirhakah's successor, Tanut Amon, in 667 tried to regain his father's former possessions, but he was repulsed and Egypt was placed under a government of twenty-two cantonal rulers subject to Assyria. These local rulers were native Egyptians in the majority of cases, but surrounded by Assyrian dictators and sympathizers.¹ Tanut Amon was finally forced to leave Egypt for the last time in 663. However the rule of the Assyrians was soon ended, for about 660 Psammetik I, a son of Necho, in company with a body of Greek mercenaries from Lydia, wrested Egypt from foreign dominance. Psammetik's rule was a great benefit to Egypt, as the entire country was thrown open to foreign trade.² There are no evidences that any aggressive attempts were made beyond the borders of Egypt into Palestine until during the reign of Josiah in 608.³

¹ Necho I was the local governor of the province of Sais.

² Some authorities place this date as late as 645 (GUTH, *Gesch.* p. 233), but the majority seem to favor an earlier date. W. MAX MÜLLER, *E. B.* col. 1245. The successful expeditions against Egypt were all undertaken during the brief period of years 671—663, and in each case after the first invasion another expedition was necessary to quell rebellions. The chances are that Assyrian rule did not have time enough to become firmly established.

³ The recently advanced theory of a second "Misraim", as proposed by WINCKLER, has led several scholars to discredit the influence of Egypt upon Palestine, and more in particular upon the kingdom of Judah during the eighth and seventh centuries. One of the strongest arguments advanced is, that Egypt was not strong enough to interfere in the politics of Palestine during the years 745—691. B. C. For our purposes, in connection with the discussions of the reign of Manasseh, the acceptance or rejection of this theory is not a matter of importance. In spite of the many brilliant attempts to substantiate this theory, the existence of a second "Misraim" is still largely a matter of theory. It is easily understood, that the term "Misraim" may have been used in connection with other lands not situated in the Nile Valley proper, for the ancient boundaries of Egypt were far more extensive than the present boundaries. The possibility of an extensive Egyptian influence before 691 is shown by the discovery of

IV.

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE
REIGN OF MANASSEH.

1) THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
REIGN.

The reign of king Manasseh, the fourteenth ruler of Judah, covered a period of a half-century and was one of the most important periods in the history of the Southern Kingdom; but unfortunately our records for this period are extremely meagre. The record in the Books of Kings comes entirely from the hands of the Deuteronomic redactors and does not rest at all upon any earlier records as the *Annals*. The earliest redactor describes this most important period in the following laconic manner: "Manasseh was twelve years old, when he began to reign; and he reigned five and fifty years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Hephzibah. And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jahwe. Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; besides his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of Jahwe. Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And Manasseh slept with his fathers and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza, and Amon his son reigned in his stead". (II K. 21:1, 2^a, 16—18.)

It is evident that we have an inadequate record of this historical period, as there is no attempt at all to relate any of the events of the reign. The primary purpose of the

some of the seals of Shabako in the royal library at Niniveh dating from 706 (?) W. MAX MÜLLER, *E. B.* col. 1244 f. For one of the more recent refutations of this theory cf. A. T. OLMEAD, *Western Asia in the days of Sargon of Assyria*. P. 56 f. note, and in the defence of the same cf. T. K. CHEYNE, *Decline and Fall of Judah*, Intro.

redactor was religious, and at the time of his writing it is probable the political and historical events of Manasseh's days had lost all of their interest. As it is, we have only the usual form of introduction and conclusion used by the editor in introducing and dismissing each successive king, with an additional comment in verse 16. It is true, we have further references in Kings and Chronicles (2 K. 21:2^b, 3—15; 2 Chron. 33:10—20) to the time of Manasseh, but they are the works of much later hands and still more imbued with a religious prejudice and spirit of moralization. Is it necessary for us to accept the conclusion, that Manasseh's reign was a total eclipse manifested in decline, inactivity, and silence?

For various self-evident reasons we are inclined to consider the above summary of the days of Manasseh as an inadequate and partial record, and the most momentous of these, is a consideration of the redactor's viewpoint. The guiding star of his writings was the spirit and the conceptions as expressed in the Deuteronomic code. The tendency was to judge kings and historical events purely in a pragmatistical manner. The judgement of a king's character was either good or bad and only a slight transgression from the editor's ideal of righteousness was sufficient to condemn his whole career. All relations with foreign nations were especially "sinful", and Manasseh as a loyal subject of Assyria became an arch-heretic and a direct enemy of Jahwe, as in the case of his grandfather Ahaz.

Again, under the necessary conditions of the editor's viewpoint there was an intentional suppression of historical data.¹ That records of historical events existed, cannot be denied, for Judah was a pivot about which a great series of events swung, and these records may have been partially destroyed or mutilated during the general reaction against foreign dominance in the reign of Josiah.² This reaction was

¹ This is more evident, when we consider how near the editor was to the time of Manasseh. The case of the long reign of Asa was different, for the events of his reign were many generations removed.

² In 2 K. 21:17 the appeal is made to an earlier authority "the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah". It is significant, that in the cases of Athalia, Jehoahaz, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah no appeal is made.

actually a declaration of revolt against Assyria, as it meant the insult to and the rejection of the Assyrian pantheon. The thoroughness of the reform and the manifest hatred of things foreign was clearly evident.¹ This observation finds a most interesting parallel in the case of the Hyksos' Dynasty in Egypt, wherein their records for the most part were destroyed or written over by later generations.²

Further, under the influence of this viewpoint, the judgement of this period was purely a resultant judgement and not a specified one. We have no reason to doubt the validity of this judgement in regard to some of the general characteristics of the period, because the testimony from other sources confirms rather than denies. On the other hand it is highly improbable that the entire half-century can be judged in such a manner, because the general outward conditions of the period are at variance with the judgement. The silence of the records and traditions as to any serious revolts or internal dissensions seems to indicate that the period was above all a time of peace and prosperity.³ That this long period was a total blank as far as developments and growths were concerned, no one will believe. It must have been an age of tremendous growth, when we consider that the small kingdom of Judah was surrounded on all sides by some of the most important political and cultural movements in early history.⁴

(1) THE NAME OF MANASSEH.

The name of Manasseh is a very familiar name throughout the Old Testament literature, and its validity seems to be

¹ 2 K. 23 : 4, 6, 11.

² K. BUDDE, *Gesch. Altheb. Lit.*, p. 87.

³ Cf. T. K. CHEYNE, *E. B.* col. 2926.

⁴ Cf. G. A. SMITH, *Exp.* July 1905, p. 9. That our history of Israel in reality is purely a religious history is well illustrated in the way the gradual discovery of outside material has changed our viewpoint of Israel's historical relations. The great effect of a single inscription and its transforming influence is well illustrated in the case of the discovery of the Moabite inscription from king Mesha.

well attested. It is best known as the name of one of the twelve tribes, which occupied land upon both sides of the Jordan to the north of Ephraim and Gad. The name seems to have been used very early as a personal name. As referring to the king of Judah it is used nine times in Kings, twelve times in Chronicles, and once in Jeremiah (Jer. 15:4). The Septuagint gives the name as *Μανάσση*. It appears also in the tributary lists of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, thus furnishing a very early authority as to its pronunciation. In the list of Esarhaddon it appears as Menase¹ and in Ashurbanipal's list as Minse.²

a) THE MEANING OF THE NAME.

The usual Hebrew etymology regards מְנַשֶּׁה as a Piel participle coming from the root נָשָׁה meaning "to forget". This is based on the explanation given in Genesis 41:51³, wherein the Piel form of the verb is used. Hence one of the well-recognized meanings has been "he who causes (a loss) to be forgotten".⁴

b) THE USE OF THE NAME.

The use of the name "Manasseh" as a personal name for the king of Judah was a departure from the usual custom of giving names compounded with the divine name. The only exceptions to this rule were Rehoboam, Manasseh, and Amon.⁵

¹ KB. II 149.

² KB. II 239. It is also interesting to note that the name occurs among many of the names used in the Jewish colony in Elephantine. Cf. ED. SACHAU, *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka* — 1911, Tafel 72, Fragment 18, p. 253.

³ Cf. GUNKEL, *Genesis* 1901 p. 396; HOLZINGER, *Genesis*, p. 238.

⁴ NÖLDEKE, E. B. col. 3295. That the name may have had another meaning is maintained by many authorities. Some have suggested, that the name is a compound of two divine titles "Men" and "Sa", and further that these deities were originally found on the west and east sides of the Jordan respectively (cf. Isa 65:11, wherein "Men" and "Gad" are mentioned together). Thus the name Manasseh was a symbolical name representing the east and the west. Cf. H. W. HOGG, E. B. col. 2920—21.

⁵ The name of Rehoboam is probably accounted for by foreign influences and a foreign mother. The name of Asa is a shortened form from

It is very possible that Hezekiah named his son Manasseh in order to win the favor of the northern districts of the country.¹ Again, it is possible that the use of the name was an actual sign of the annexation of the northern territory.²

The construction of any theory upon the irregular occurrence of Manasseh's name would not be a very safe proceeding. It is more than probable that in the earlier days of the Hebrew people the name "Manasseh" was a name wholly confined to the northern districts, but to consider the name only prevalent in the north, especially after the Fall of Samaria, is unwarranted. It is very possible, the name was common in Judah during the days of Hezekiah, and its use was considered perfectly natural. At any rate this apparent irregularity in the names of Manasseh and Amon in comparison with Uzziah, Hezekiah, and Josiah must remain as presenting a peculiar contrast.³

(2) THE DATE OF MANASSEH'S REIGN.

In order to determine the date of Manasseh's reign we are introduced to the great and difficult problem of Old Testament chronology. The Hebrews possessed no system of chronology, as they employed no fixed date or era from which subsequent events were dated. Their chronology was based wholly on the cumbersome system of internal synchronisms between the reigns of the kings of the two kingdoms. The difficulties of this system are too well-recognized to be discussed here, but it is generally conceded, that it is impossible to construct a systematic chronology from the Biblical data alone. The scheme of chronology is artificial, and thus only

אֶחָז (T. K. CHEYNE, E. B. col. 321), and likewise the name of Ahaz is a shortened form from "Jehoahaz" as shown by the inscriptions of Tiglath Pileser III, wherein it is given as "Yauhasi" KB. II 20.

¹ CHEYNE, *Critica Biblica*, Part. IV, Kings, p. 389. The Chronicler describes Hezekiah as sending notices of his religious reforms to the remaining Israelites in the north (2 Chron. 30 : 1 f.) with the end in view to win their favor. Cf. BENZINGER, *Gesch.*, p. 102.

² Cf. 2 K. 23 : 4. 15—20; 2 K. 30 : 16 f. Jer. 41 : 5.

³ Cf. BARNES, *Kings*, p. 302—303.

by recourse to external tests is any progress possible. And further even together with these external data we do not secure an exact chronology, but only a working chronology.¹

The most important external test for fixing the date of Manasseh's reign is the unassailable date of the Fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. With this date, as a fixed point and reckoning back we have for all practical purposes the last year of Manasseh. We find this year to be 641 B. C. or according to a slightly different reckoning 638 B. C.² Accepting 641 for the last year of Manasseh and using the period of 55 years as given for the length of his reign, we have 696—95 for the year of his accession to the throne. On the other hand accepting 638, we have 693—92 as the year of accession.

This general result for the date of Manasseh's reign would probably be the most acceptable and satisfactory interpretation of the Biblical data, but in view of the following observations, we are inclined to place the beginning of Manasseh's reign a few years later:

(a) According to the pre-arranged scheme of chronology in the Books of Kings, 480 years elapsed between Solomon's Temple and the return from the Babylonian Exile. And in this scheme of chronology Manasseh's accession to the throne occurs at the beginning of the last third of the 480 years or 160 years before the return from Exile. This bears all the evidence of being an artificial date.

(b) A still further fact to be considered is the question of another expedition against Palestine after the year 701 B. C. The first bit of evidence to support a later expedition is the mention of Tirhakah from Egypt.³ It is a well attested fact that Tirhakah was not in complete control of the throne in

¹ cf. MARTI, E. B. col. 773 f.; BARNES, Kings. Intro. p. XXV—XXVIII.

² The Biblical data which allows Amon 2 years, Josiah 31, Jehoiakim 11 years, and Zedekiah 11 years, are probably based upon very reliable traditions, because of the nearness of the redactor to the events of these reigns (cf. MARTI, E. B. col. 796, GUTHE, Gesch. p. 254). During this period two other kings reigned, namely Jehoahaz for 3 months and Jehoiachin for 3 months.

³ 2K. 19 : 9; Herodotus II, 141.

Egypt until 691 B. C.¹, and it is highly improbable that any aggressive movements were made towards Palestine before his rights to the throne were securely established.²

Again, we have a few fragmentary evidences of a later expedition from Assyrian sources. It is admitted that the work of Sennacherib in 701 was an unfinished task and that another expedition was necessary.³ The conditions in and about Babylon were of such a nature, that no opportunity for such an expedition presented itself for several years. Indeed, it is very natural because of these conditions to place the expedition between the years 689 and 681⁴, but the recent discovery of a bit of historical evidence does not warrant this supposition. The first of these is a reference found in the Annals of Esarhaddon, alluding to an expedition of Sennacherib into northern Arabia, at which time he captured the fortress of Adumu.⁵ In the second place a fragment of one of Sennacherib's Annals has been discovered by the French Assyriologist Schiel,⁶ which explicitly implies an expedition against the west between the years 691 and 689, but the fragment only carries the progress of the expedition as far as Northern Arabia.⁷

¹ W. MAX MÜLLER, E. B. col. 1245.

² PETRIE, Egypt and Israel, P. 77, is inclined to reconcile the date of Tirhakah with the date 701 as he says. "The Jewish writers did not distinguish between viceroys of Egypt and sole kings, either in Sua or Tirhakah, but the Assyrians used the term commander-in-chief correctly". Cf. also LEHMANN-HAUPT, Gesch. p. 114.

³ Cf. JEREMIAS, A. T. im Lichte des alten Orients, p. 310.

⁴ Cf. GUTHE, Gesch. p. 254.

⁵ The location of Adumu is uncertain. Some have identified it with Petra, and others have placed it to the east of Edom in Northern Arabia. Cf. G. A. SMITH, Exp. Sept. 1905, p. 231. Herodotus (II. 141) mentions Sennacherib as the "king of the Arabians and Assyrians". The mention of an expedition into Arabia is very suggestive of the fact that Sennacherib may have approached Palestine through Arabia and Edom instead of by the northern route. GUTHE, Gesch. p. 222.

⁶ cf. WEBER, Sanherib, Der alte Orient, 1904, Heft 3, p. 21.

⁷ cf. WINCKLER, A. T. Untersuchung. P. 26 f.; Gesch. Babylons und Assyriens, p. 254 f., PRASEK, MVAG. 1903, Heft 4; JEREMIAS, A. T. im Lichte des alten Orients, p. 309 f.; GUTHE, Gesch., p. 221 f.; BENZINGER,

Further, the apparent differences in the accounts in Kings (II K 18:13—19:37) seem to imply more than the one expedition of 701. We have already noted in our analysis of this section, that it was made up of several accounts from different sources. This fact is even more evident when we consider the subject matter of the different accounts. There is a natural breach after verse 16 and another after 19:8, thus giving us three separate accounts. The first account (18:13—16) describes Sennacherib as laying waste to the cities of Judah. Hezekiah submits by sending a message to Lachish and pays a heavy tribute. The second account (18:17—19:8) describes the fact of sending an army from Lachish against Jerusalem under the charge of the Assyrian officers. Rabshakeh threatens the city and Hezekiah finally implores the assistance of Isaiah. Isaiah replies by giving assurance of relief. The third account (19:9—37): it is reported to Sennacherib that Tirhakah is approaching Palestine, and a message of a threatening nature is sent to Hezekiah. Again Isaiah answers Hezekiah's entreaties by the assurance of deliverance, but no reason is given.

It is generally conceded, that the first two accounts are parallel descriptions of the same event. The first is written in a terse style with no comments, while the second is more from a religious standpoint with an effort to assign reasons for the events. Until recently the third account has also been considered a parallel to the other two narratives. In fact, considering the arguments that have been advanced for and against the facts of parallelism, there seems to be very little ground for drawing definite conclusions in either direction. The indications, which seem to disprove the assertions of parallelism are in brief: The mention of Tirhakah cannot be reconciled definitely with so early a date as 701 B. C. The position of Sennacherib's army is not the same in both narratives. The mention of Sennacherib's murder does not seem to be in keeping with so early a date as 701. Again, the promise

Gesch. 101; G. A. SMITH, *Exp. Sept.* 1905, p. 215 f.; ROGERS, *Religion of Babylon and Assyria*, p. 64.

given in verse 32 does not harmonize with Sennacherib's blockade of Jerusalem (18:17). And also the answer of Isaiah in verses 20f contains no allusion to the answer given in verses 6f. as would be natural to expect, if they closely followed each other.¹

Therefore, in consequence of the above observations, we must fix the date of Manasseh's accession to the throne a few years later than the traditional numbers demand.² Two courses of procedure are open to us, one to accept the traditional number of 55 years as given or to reduce the number. In the former case, granting that Hezekiah died immediately following the campaign of 690, the acceptance of the 55 years would place Manasseh's last year in 636, which is an improbable situation. Apparently the number 55 is too large, but by what principle shall we be guided in reducing the number to harmonize with historical situations? The arbitrary reduction of the number by one or two years may be reconciled from a chronological standpoint, but the general historical conditions of the century are not wholly satisfied. If we reduce the number by ten years making it 45 instead of 55, as the majority of historians are inclined to do, we obtain a result, which seems to be more in harmony with historical relations.³ This would make the year of Manasseh's

¹ The comparative late origin of all these accounts, except 18:13—16, renders a definite conclusion impossible. Cf. PRASEK, MVAG., 1903, Heft 4; G. A. SMITH, Exp. Sept. 1905, p. 215 f. The cause for the retreat of the Assyrians (19:35 f.), as also in the case of the Egyptian tradition, was plainly the interposition of a great calamity. To maintain that the mouse is a symbol of pestilence especially in view of the oft quoted passages in 1 Sam 5 ff. is unwarranted. Cf. T. K. CHEYNE, E. B. col. 3676.

² WINCKLER maintains, that Manasseh and not Hezekiah, was on the throne during the second deliverance of Jerusalem, but there is not the slightest evidence for such a hypothesis. KAT.³ p. 274.

³ This result has received much of its support from the redactional passages in Kings (2 K. 18:2 and 13), wherein it is taken for granted that Hezekiah reigned 29 years and that "the fourteenth year" of his reign was the same as 701 B. C. The validity of these dates is doubtful, because of their late origin (cf. MARTI, E. B. col. 795), but the arguments from a general historical standpoint remain unweakened.

accession fall in the year 683—82 or 686—85 reckoning back from 638 or 641 respectively. Thus we may safely conclude that the reign of Manasseh extended from circa 685 to 640 B. C.

(3) THE POLICY OF MANASSEH.

The reign of Manasseh taken as a whole was a complete victory for the Assyrian party in Judah. One of the consequences was opposition to the religious party and all patriotic expressions of opposite party opinion. "Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another" (2 K. 21:16). These are the words of the first redactor in summing up his judgements of the period. It does not mean that Manasseh's policy was the means of working special vengeance upon the prophets alone (Jer. 2:30 f), but simply upon any person or parties of persons opposed to his foreign principles.¹ This policy of Assyrian loyalty, no doubt, continued for the greater part of Manasseh's reign as shown by the introduction and persistence of Assyrian cults, by the sudden reversal of policy following the death of Manasseh's son, Amon (2 K. 21:21), and by the tremendous and noteworthy reaction of Josiah's reform, which in part was social and political as well as religious.

The persistence of Manasseh in adhering to his Assyrian policy for the greater part of his reign was partly the natural result of political conditions and circumstances, rather than a complete and willing submission. In fact, this submission was not a new thing to Judah, as the kingdom was tributary to Assyria under the reign of Ahaz and part of the reign of Hezekiah. We have every evidence to show that the yoke of the Assyrian was grievous in the extreme, and that the nation

¹ WINCKLER, KAT.³ p. 275. WELLHAUSEN maintains, that the idea of shedding of blood was bound up with the idea of bigotry in the mind of the editor. Cf. WELLHAUSEN, *Gesch.* p. 131. Manasseh's persecutions were probably confined to Jerusalem, as shown by the loyal support of his policy by the "people of the land" in Amon's reign. At least the program of persecution was not very extensive, as there is not the slightest intimation of it in Deuteronomy.

was hated of every people both small and great, because of the cruel treatment of cities and their inhabitants.¹ As it happened, Manasseh's reign fell within the period of Assyria's greatest military power under the reigns of Esarhaddon (681—668) and Ashurbanipal (668—626).² The chances for revolt were few and uncertain, for the great Aramean states were no more, and the Philistine confederacy was helpless, and even the restless Arabs were in subjection. Also the great city of Sidon (677—6) had been invaded, destroyed, and its surroundings made into an Assyrian province. Egypt was no longer in a position to offer aid, as it was an Assyrian province, in fact as well as in name. Indeed, all the conditions were such that Manasseh's Assyrian policy was the most practical course of procedure.

Although the Assyrian party was in power for the greater part of Manasseh's reign, the general historical situations will not allow the placing of this power coterminous with the beginning of the reign. The conditions immediately following second deliverance of Jerusalem in 690 would mean, if anything, the increase in the prestige of the religious party. In fact, the prophetic line or school was too strong to disappear immediately with the death of Hezekiah. With this in view, the chances are, that the religious forces in Judah were the guiding factors in the state, at least as long as Manasseh was in the stage of adolescence.³ On the other hand the

¹ Nahum 3 : 17—19, Zeph. 2 : 13—15. This tremendous display of cruelty created a tendency to cower and to bring into momentary subjection the nations. Concerning the treatment of Sidon in 677—6, one of Judah's neighbors, cf. ROGER's *History of Babylonia and Assyria*, II, p. 224, 225.

² The chances for revolt, because of dynastic changes, were few. In Assyria these changes were almost always the signal for uprisings and rebellions. A despotism acquired by the sword must be maintained by the same means.

³ There is no evidence of Judah entering again into rebellion. Presumably the customary tribute to Assyria was paid, as in the case of Hezekiah, more as a measure of insurance against the return of the Assyrians. STADE maintains, that the age of Manasseh as given in Kings (2 K. 21 : 1) is wrong. Cf. *Gesch. I*, p. 639.

withdrawal of the Assyrians from Palestine in the presence of Tirhakah was an advantage to the Egyptians. And with this advantage it is highly improbable, that the powerful and energetic Tirhakah kept his hands out of Palestine for the comparatively long period of years 690—677, 6. In fact, the dreadful punishment meted out to Sidon implies, that Tirhakah was altogether too prominent in stirring up revolts in Palestine and Syria.¹ That Sidon was not alone in this rebellion is shown by the immediate submission of the neighbouring kings after the destruction of the city. In this submission Esarhaddon received the homage, probably in Nineveh, of twenty-two kings from Syria and Palestine, including Baal, king of Tyre and Manasseh, "king of the city of Judah".² Thus the most suitable opportunity for the introduction of Assyrian customs was immediately following Manasseh's formal acknowledgement of vassalage to Assyria. We feel justified in placing the beginning of Manasseh's Assyrian policy in the years 677—6, when he was mature enough to openly break with the religious party.³

(4) THE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS.

For the following reasons we are persuaded of the importance of commercial developments during Manasseh's reign, and especially during the second period, which was above all a period of peace:⁴

¹ Cf. W. MAX MÜLLER, E. B. col. 1245.

² Cf. E. B. col. 1332.

³ The following comparisons in the cases of Joash and Josiah are of interest:

Joash (835—796)	year of accession	—7 (2K. 11 : 21)	Policy	23 d year
			(2K. 12 : 6)	
Josiah (637—607)	" "	—8 (2K. 22 : 1)	"	18 d "
			(2K. 22 : 3)	
Manass. (685—640)	" "	—12 (2K. 21 : 1)	"	8—10 d "
			(677—6 BC)	

During the periods of adolescence of Joash and Josiah the priestly circles were in charge, and in the case Manasseh the religious party.

⁴ It is a question whether we can consider the Jew of Manasseh's time as a trader of any great degree, for the people of Judah were prima-

a) A great increase in trade relations in Judah was possible, because of the general political relations. Manasseh's reign extended through a period wherein one of the first and greatest of requisites for trade was fulfilled, namely: the prevalence of a uniform governmental control throughout western Asia.¹

b) A great increase and a profitable resource from trade was possible because of Judah's geographical situation. Before the Fall of Samaria practically all the trade routes of importance were in the possession of the Northern Kingdom, but following the disappearance of Israel as a political power, naturally many of these routes came under the control of Judah. The city of Jerusalem probably became the center of unparalleled trading activities, as shown by its wide reputation. Esarhaddon designated Manasseh as king of the "city" of Judah.² Ezekiel called Jerusalem the "gate of the peoples"³, and the king of Persia in the days of Zerubbabel referred to Jerusalem's commercial greatness, when he said, "There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem . . .; and tribute, custom, and toll, was paid unto them".⁴

The nature of the trade enjoyed by the kingdom of Judah was doubtless of a transit nature. Manasseh by virtue of his relationships to Assyria and the importance of Jerusalem was probably the supervisor of the transit trade between Phoenicia on the one hand and Edom, Eastern Palestine, and Arabia on the other.⁵ The presence of a special trading

rily peasants and tillers of the soil. Many writers have recently claimed for the Jews very early trading abilities, especially in view of the colony of Jews at Elephantine (cf. PETRIE, *Egypt and Israel* p. 88, 93—96), but such proof is not conclusive, for the primary purpose of the colony was military and not commercial.

¹ Cf. K. BUDDE, *Rektoratsrede*, p. 7 f. These uniform political relations likewise meant an active exchange of embassies between Jerusalem and Nineveh. The apparent novelty of Merodach Baladan's embassy to Hezekiah is an indication, that they were not frequent before that time.

² Cf. E. B. col. 1332.

³ Ezek. 32 : 2 f.

⁴ Ezra 4 : 20.

⁵ Cf. G. A. SMITH, E. B. col. 5175. That this trade was considerable,

quarter in or very near the city of Jerusalem is also additional proof of the presence of foreign traders.¹ It is very probable, that this trading quarter may have been considered an official center for the Assyrian merchants, as the Aramean states had bazaars in Samaria.²

c) The presence of extensive commercial regulations in the Deuteronomic code implies the development of commercial activities. That a great many of these activities developed in the reign of Manasseh follows from a comparison of the laws of the Book of the Covenant with the laws of Deuteronomy. In the Book of the Covenant there are various laws effecting practically all the social conditions of life, but there is a noticeable absence of laws respecting trade or traders.³

(5) THE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS.

Notwithstanding the prevailing tendency to trace all of Israel's noteworthy developments to Babylonian-Assyrian sources, it must be admitted, that the influences of the Assyrians during Manasseh's reign were important and considerable. One of the most general results must have been a widening of Judah's conception of the world.⁴ This as-

as regards variety and value, is implied from Ezekiel's list given in Ezek. 27 : 12 f.

¹ Zeph. 1 : 11. The location of this trading quarter has been the matter of much discussion, but the most probable location was near one of the city's gates in the Valley of Kedron. Cf. CHEYNE, E. B. col. 2906—7.

² 1 K. 20 : 34, cf. Nahum 3 : 16 a.

³ cf. Deut. 23 : 20. Interest; also on the same, probably somewhat later 15 : 6; 28 : 12 f. 44 f.; 15 : 3 Debt; 15 : 7 f.; 24 : 15, 17, 22. Treatment of Poor. In Exod. 22 : 7 and 25 there are primitive laws respecting deposit and interest. The matter of tribute and its payment brings in a very interesting question, especially in regard to its collection and payment. The regular payment of tribute to Assyria during Manasseh's reign must have led to some organization in its collection and payment. A land tax evidently was unknown (WELHAUSEN, *Gesch.* p. 89—90), and it is questionable whether a property tax existed or not (2 K. 23 : 35). The kings' rights were comparatively many and probably arbitrarily enforced, especially in cases of great need. Cf. Amos 7 : 1; 1 Sam. 8 : 12; 1 K. 10 : 28 f. Ezek. 48 : 77.

⁴ From our analysis of sources we have shown, that practically no

sumption is not so groundless, when we consider the abundant evidences for the introduction and patronage of the Babylonian-Assyrian religious cults. There is no reason to doubt that the worship of the "host of heaven" was intense, and that in every particular the way was opened to the corresponding introduction of Babylonian-Assyrian science. As a direct confirmation of this, some authorities claim, that closely following Manasseh's reign a change was made in the Jewish calendar.¹ The proof cited is from the Book of Jeremiah,² wherein the scribe Baruch mentions the ninth month of the fifth year of Jehoiakim, which was a winter month. This is evidently a direct use of the Babylonian system of placing the first month of the year in the spring in contrast to the earlier Hebrew method, which dated the beginning of the year in the autumn.³ To consider this change, a result of the Babylonian-Assyrian influences of Manasseh's time is hardly justifiable. The passages in Jeremiah are admittedly from some of the more original parts of the Book,⁴ but at least they cannot be placed very far from the time of the Exile. The great majority of evidence seems to indicate, that this change did not come about until the Exile. The laws of Deuteronomy use the ancient names for the months, and in no case is there any indication of a change.⁵

The recent discovery of two small cuneiform tablets is indicative of the influence of Babylonian-Assyrian culture during the days of Manasseh. These tablets were discovered upon the ancient site of Gezer about twenty miles from Jerusalem and are considered to be "genuine products of the ancient dwellers at Gezer".⁶ These tablets were deeds, which

writings of magnitude or importance can be assigned to Manasseh's time. However there is one good example (Gen. 2 : 10—15) of an effort to incorporate geographical details, which may possibly come from Manasseh's reign.

¹ G. A. SMITH, *Exp.* Oct. 1905, p. 315 f.

² Jer. 36 : 9, 22; cf. Jer. 41 : 1.

³ Exodus 23 : 16; 34 : 22.

⁴ Cf. DUHM, *Jeremia*, p. 291.

⁵ Cf. MARTI, *E. B.* col. 5365 f.; WELLHAUSEN, *Prol.* p. 105 f.

⁶ Cf. C. H. W. JOHNS, *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly*, 1905, p. 206.

concerned the sale of some land and were drawn up according to the customary Assyrian methods. They bear the dates of 651 and 649 during the reign of Ashurbanipal. One of the pieces of property belonged to a man by the name of Nathaniah, and the notary in one case bore the Assyrian name Nergal-shar-usur.¹ The incident drawn from the biography of Jeremiah² may be a similar case showing Babylonian-Assyrian influence.

2) THE PERIOD OF THE ASSYRIAN CONQUESTS (685—660).

The reign of Manasseh naturally falls into the two general periods representing entirely separate conditions: the Period of the Assyrian conquests 685—660 B. C. and the Period of Peace 660—640 B. C. The year 660 represented a new epoch in Assyria's relations to the far West, especially Egypt, the year, in which Psammetik I. rebelled and wrested Egypt from Assyrian control. The year may also have furnished the first visible sign of the approaching decline of Assyria, but the nations of Palestine were probably unconscious of it as long as Ashurbanipal reigned. The great nation of Mesopotamian valley must not be thought of as suddenly losing all of its greatness, for it continued to exercise its power and authority for several decades as shown by the retention of Palestine and the quelling of civil disaffections.³

The distinguishing features of this first period of Manasseh's reign were the facts of the Assyrian campaigns against Egypt, the necessity of reconstruction, the introduction of new customs, and the consequent beginnings of a widespread religious reaction. The almost continual presence of the Assyrians in Palestine from 677—663 furnishes us with the only means of determining any of the fixed dates of Manasseh's reign. In 677—76 Esarhaddon mentioned Manasseh

¹ Cf. Nergal-sharezer mentioned in Jer. 39 : 3, 13; G. A. SMITH, *Exp.* Oct. 1905, p. 312; cf. Nahum 3 : 17 a.

² Jer. 32 : 6—15; DUHM *Jeremia*. p. 260 f.; N. SCHMIDT, *E. B.* col. 2378.

³ Cf. ROGERS, *History of Babylonia and Assyria* II. p. 291.

as one of the twenty-two kings from the West, who paid homage to him, and most probably in Nineveh itself. At this time Manasseh was obliged to furnish building materials for the building projects in Nineveh and vicinity.¹ Presumably in the expeditions undertaken by Esarhaddon against Egypt Manasseh was obliged to furnish his quota of troops and war material.² Another series of fixed dates are furnished by the expedition of Ashurbanipal in 668—67 and 663. In the former expedition Manasseh was obliged to furnish "men and ships in addition to the customary tribute".³

The first years of Manasseh's reign were evidently years of much disorder⁴ and a general reconstruction was necessary following the ravages of the Assyrian armies during Hezekiah's time. This reconstruction was primarily a restoration of the rural economy.⁵ Sennacherib in 701 asserted that he placed 200,150 inhabitants of the rural sections of Judah in captivity. When we compare these numbers with the comparatively small numbers taken into captivity from Samaria⁶ and the Babylonian captivity⁷, it is clearly evident, that Judah was punished almost to the point of extinction. And even granting that Sennacherib did not carry

¹ Cf. C. H. W. JOHNS, E. B. col. 1332; WINCKLER, KAT.³ p. 87.

² It is related in Esarhaddon's inscriptions concerning the expedition of 671—70, that when they were marching through the desert regions to the south of Judah the army encountered double-headed monsters and a multitude of dreadful creatures. The army was on the point of demoralization, but as the incident is related, the great gods of Assyria came to a timely rescue (cf. JEREMIAS, A. T. im Lichte des alten Orients, P. 310). Jeremias suggests, that Isa. 30 : 6 may be a recollection of this expedition.

³ Cf. L. W. KING, E. B. col. 372 f.; WINCKLER, KAT.³ p. 87; LEHMANN-HAUPT, Gesch. 128.

⁴ BENZINGER, Gesch. p. 103.

⁵ The growth of Jerusalem during this period must have been phenomenal, as doubtless great numbers of people were obliged to take refuge within the city during Sennacherib's campaigns of 701 and 690. The abandoned estates of the countryside probably fell into the hands of an unscrupulous few, as is generally the situation. Cf. Micah. 2 : 2.

⁶ 27, 150.

⁷ 14,000—18,000 cf. E. B. col. 2249.

all of these people into captivity, because of the haste of his withdrawal, we must admit, that the rural conditions were badly disorganized. The severities of Sennacherib's invasion are clearly implied in the first chapter of *Isaiah*.

Further, the introduction of new customs and practices must be placed in this period. The most suitable time was immediately following Manasseh's formal submission to Esarhaddon in 677—76. The almost continual presence of the Assyrian forces following 677—76 made it easier to introduce new customs within the social life. It was the case of Solomon over again in order to please the foreign element present marked favor was displayed towards things foreign.¹ Among the more wealthy classes special favor was shown in the matter of foreign dress.²

Closely associated with the introduction of new customs was the introduction of new religious cults, because Babylonian-Assyrian civilization likewise included Babylonian-Assyrian religious practices. The motive for their introduction was in part political, an expression of loyalty to the over-ruling power of Assyria, and in part a motive of reaction against the prophetic ideals of religious practice. The adoption and patronage of foreign cults probably served as an opening wedge for the revival of the older and more native forms.

3) THE PERIOD OF PEACE (660—640 B. C.).

The important features of this second period of Manasseh's reign were the conditions of peace and prosperity, and the increase in the importance of the rural population. This period was the characteristic period of Manasseh's rule, the time, that was especially present to the minds of the writers of the Old Testament. The first period was a scene of great historical events and the occasion for the introduction of new elements,

¹ We find that during the Assyrian occupation of Egypt many of the native Egyptians assumed Assyrian names in order to win the favor of their conquerors. Cf. ED. MEYER, *Gesch. Egyptens*, p. 351 f.

² *Zeph.* 1 : 8 b.

but the real effect of these new elements was reserved for the second.¹

This time of Manasseh's reign was first and foremost a time of peace. There was a total absence of the Assyrian armies, and consequently no demands upon the military resources of Judah. This period was parallel to the great period of Assyria's enmity with Elam (660—640), which may be one of the reasons for the absence of any great military activity in the West. The development of trade relations probably reached unparalleled limits and articles of luxury were in excess.²

The increase of the rural population was likewise one of the important features of this period. During the first period the rural sections of Judah probably regained a part of their former prosperity, but the continual presence of the Assyrian armies must have placed a great drain upon the land and its natural resources. With this feature entirely wanting in the second period, and together with the general conditions of peace and the royal patronage of the local cults, the rural sections doubtless experienced a phenomenal growth, both as to actual numbers and importance, as Jeremiah and Nahum were both from the village sections of Judah.³ The influence of the rural sections was of commanding importance as shown by the sudden retribution of Amon's death⁴, and the laws of Deuteronomy.⁵

¹ This was especially so in regard to trade conditions. Although Egypt was no longer a vassal of Assyria, the new policy of Psammetik was the means of producing unparalleled commercial advantages for Palestine and Syria.

² Zeph. 1 : 8 b, 9, 15. From the prophecies of Amos we are made acquainted with the great streams of wealth, which flooded the land of Israel from Damascus; but how much better were the conditions for the influx of luxuries into Judah during the times of Manasseh. The reign of Ashurbanipal was primarily a great period of luxury.

³ Jer. 2 : 28; 3 : 2; 3 : 9; 11 : 13. Jeremiah frequently addressed his prophecies to the "people of Judah" cf. Jer. 4 : 3, 4, 5, (11 a?).

⁴ 2 K. 21 : 21.

⁵ Deut. 21 : 1; 22 : 25 ff. In spite of Deuteronomy's emphasis upon the centralization of the cultus, one of the great motives of the Book was

The absence of any Assyrian expeditions in Palestine during this time has left us without any fixed dates, but there is at least one event of importance, which must have occurred shortly after 660 B. C. That Egypt failed to regain her boundaries and to establish her border privileges is highly improbable. In fact, we have evidences, especially in the light of recent excavations, that the great border fortress of Tehaphnehes between Southern Palestine and Egypt again came into the possession of Egypt and assumed great importance in the latter part of Manasseh's reign.¹ There are no historical evidences to show that Egypt made any aggressions beyond this fortress either in the way of actual expeditions or party intrigue, while Manasseh was upon the throne.²

The closing years of Manasseh's reign are in obscurity in the same way as the opening years. There are no definite indications of revolt from the Assyrian yoke, for the reason that the day for independent western states was a matter of the past.³ Manasseh's policy was one of force (2 K. 21:16), and doubtless minor disturbances were quelled with a strong hand. It is very likely that the majority were thoroughly contented with his policy as shown by the sudden revenge of Amon's death. That the forces of rebellion were gaining strength was clearly evident by the discontinuation of Manasseh's policies after Amon's death. The death of Amon

political in the sense that the provincial interests of Judah were duly recognized. The writers were not concerned with Jerusalem alone.

¹ PETRIE, *Egypt and Israel* p. 87—8. It was a place of importance from "the middle of the reign of Manasseh, through Amon, Josiah, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah" cf. p. 85 f. and 93, cf. also Jer. 2:16; 43:5—7; 46:14; Ezk. 30:14—18.

² CHEYNE suggests, that if the name Amon had any relations to the Egyptian deity, that it was a good proof of the re-entering of Egyptian influence into the politics of Judah and the fluctuation of political parties. Cf. T. K. CHEYNE, *E. B.* col. 1458.

³ The appearance of the Assyrian forces in Northern Arabia shortly after the revolution in Babylon in 647 and their near approach to the southern boundaries of Palest. may have served as a practical reminder of the Assyrian power. GUTHIE, *Gesch.* p. 227.

was the death blow to Manasseh's policies in spite of the sudden retribution of his death.

There are other events accredited by some to belong to the reign of Manasseh, and more especially to the second period. These incidents are recorded only by the Chronicler and are discussed here separately:

(1) MANASSEH'S BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY.

The Chronicler is very explicit in giving the cause of Manasseh's enforced captivity, when he says, "And Jahwe spoke to Manasseh, and to his people, but they gave no heed, wherefore Jahwe brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh in hooks, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon". a) Is this event as related by the Chronicler historical? b) What is the basis of this story?

a) The determination of the historicity of this event involves three very important considerations, namely: — the viewpoint and purpose of the author, the silence of the Books of Kings, and the general relation of the event to Old Testament literature.

The viewpoint and the purpose of the Chronicler are so strong, that the historicity of this event cannot be granted.¹ A careful survey of the Books of Chronicles reveals the fact, that the utmost liberty was taken in the treatment of historical situations. The purpose and viewpoint of the Chronicler was that of a church historian interested in a biased way in the Temple and its relations to the Jewish people. His conceptions were thoroughly imbued with a theological idea of divine retribution of sin, and the providential care of the race. With these controlling ideas it was impossible or at least inconsistent, that Manasseh should reign so long and

¹ We admit that story and history are not clearly separated in Old Testament literature, and that one often times passes into the other through a series of minute gradations. However, we affirm that to mark an event as unhistorical does not any way detract from its possible value in other ways.

prosperously, becoming the "chief of sinners" by introducing and worshipping the gods of the Assyrian pantheon, and at last dying a natural death. To the Chronicler "a long life" and "godliness" were synonymous terms, and hence the great question was, how can this glaring inconsistency be reconciled with the idea of Jahwe's direct retribution of sin? Naturally one of the most plausible remedies was the interposition of a punishment of some kind, namely: the supposition of a Babylonian captivity.

Again the silence of the Books of kings is further proof tending to discredit the historical worth of this event. The silence of the Books of Kings in itself is not a strong argument, but in connection with these other considerations, it is a strong element of proof. The two redactors of the Books of Kings considered Manasseh as one of worst and most despotic kings of Judah. Granting that the first redactor may have overlooked the fact of Manasseh's punishment, certainly the long and bitter denunciation of Manasseh and Judah in 2 K. 21:10—15 would have included such an event, if it existed.¹

Further, the general relation of this event to Old Testament literature is an important feature in the determination of its historicity. The writers and prophets of the pre-exilic times are agreed, that Manasseh's sins were not wholly personal, but national as well. The people of Judah had sinned, and the punishments which followed were likewise national (Jer. 15:4). The Babylonian Exile was the punishment of Judah for the sins of Manasseh's time. To be sure, the event as related, describes the "host of the king of Assyria" as coming against "them" (the people), but this is only incidental to the main facts of Manasseh's capture, enforced captivity,

¹ Some authorities maintain, that the words of "Isaiah", "Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day shall be carried to Babylon and nothing shall be left, saith Jahwe" (2 K. 20:17) refer to a special Babylonian captivity of the king's household. Cf. BARNES, *Kings*, p. 297—8. This passage comes from the legends of the prophets and is very late in origin.

repentance, and reform, which were essential, in order to satisfy the Chronicler's need of a punishment.

b) The answer to this question involves the discussion of the basis of the story. In the light of the Assyrian inscriptions many suppositions have been advanced to credit the captivity of Manasseh with historical worth. Some authorities see in these suppositions independent testimonies of the Chronicler's honesty in using a historical event or tradition as the basis of his story. The astonishing parallel of the enforced captivity of Necho I. of Egypt is considered as rendering the story more plausible as a historical fact. The first and most influential contribution was made by E. SCHRADER,¹ wherein the following detailed observations were set forth:

(a) Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal both mention "Menase", or "Minse" king of Judah² in their lists of tributary kings from the west.

(b) Samassumukin (668—648), the brother of Ashurbanipal and viceroy of Babylon, in seeking to rebell against Assyrian lordship, conceived the plan of stirring up rebellions in various parts of the empire, thus thinking, his own plans would be furthered. That many of his plans were successful is shown by evidences of sympathetic revolts among the tribes of Arabia, and in Hauran, Edom, Moab, Phoenicia, and several other places.³

(c) Further, there is no direct evidence that Judah rebelled, but it is clearly evident, that suspicions of unloyalty were possible, and Manasseh, in order to clear himself, would be obliged to appear before Ashurbanipal in person. There are numerous inscriptions to prove that Ashurbanipal received homage from various kings shortly after 647 in Babylon. Therefore the probabilities are, that Manasseh was summoned before Ashurbanipal.⁴

A further supposition for the basis of this story is advanced

¹ KAT.² 367 f.

² K. B. II 149, 239.

³ K. B. II 185, 195.

⁴ This view was published in 1882, but its acception in whole or in part has been slow. Cf. S. OETTLI, *Gesch.* 1905, p. 424 f.; WINCKLER, A. T.

by Winckler¹ wherein he places the visit of Manasseh under Esarhaddon in 677—76 in Nineveh instead of Babylon. This supposition at least removes one inconsistency of the story, the mention of the "hosts of the king of Assyria" and "Babylon". However, the question as to whether it was Babylon or Nineveh does not enter seriously into our discussion. Both places can be easily reconciled, when we consider the political relations of Babylon and Assyria during the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal.²

Granting that Manasseh appeared before one of the kings of Assyria either in Nineveh or Babylon the evidence for the use of the event as a basis for the story is wanting. The story is totally independent of any historical situation of this nature. A full consideration of the details of the story, as for example, the host of the Assyrians, the enforced captivity of the king of Judah, his repentance, his release, and his reforms in Jerusalem, impells the thought that the story does not in any way depend upon a real or an imagined visit of Manasseh to Mesopotamia. The purpose of the writer is clearly fulfilled without the aid of historical suppositions. A most convincing proof is furnished by the analogous situation in the case of Ahaz, wherein the Chronicler describes him as being punished and led captive to Damascus.³ Practically all commentators and scholars are agreed, that this captivity of Ahaz is pure fiction, an invention of the Chronicler for religious purposes.⁴ The only basis for the story was the fact,

Untersuchung, p. 122; GUTHE, *Gesch.*, p. 227; BARNES, *Kings*, p. 302; CURTIS, *Chronicles*, p. 498 f.; LEHMANN-HAUPT, *Gesch.* p. 135, 143.

¹ KAT.³ p. 274.

² Some authorities have even taken the liberty of amending the text and reading "Nineveh" instead of "Babylon". Cf. T. K. CHEYNE, *E. B. col.* 2927. CHEYNE makes the suggestion that מְלִיכָה refers to a city in Northern Arabia, cf. T. K. CHEYNE, *Decline and Fall of Judah* p. 58.

³ 2 Chr, 28 : 5.

⁴ In face of the direct evidences in 2 K. 16 : 10 that Ahaz visited Damascus, no one thinks of thereby proving, that the Chronicler's story of Ahaz's captivity was based upon a historical event. The story here as in the case of Manasseh does not need the aid of historical probabilities to fulfill its purpose.

that Manasseh was a vassal of Assyria.¹ Therefore we feel justified in drawing the conclusion, that the story of Manasseh's Babylonian captivity does not in any case depend upon a historical event for a fulfilment of its purpose.²

(2) MANASSEH'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS.

The account of Manasseh's religious reforms is as follows:— "And he took away the foreign gods, and the idol out of the house of Jahwe, and all of the altars, that he had built in the mount of the house of Jahwe, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city. And he built up the altar of Jahwe and offered thereon sacrifices of peace-offerings and thanksgiving and commanded Judah to serve Jahwe the God of Israel. Nevertheless the people sacrificed still in the high places, but only unto Jahwe their God."

This accredited activity of Manasseh in regard to religious reforms is a natural sequence of the story of his captivity and repentance. The repentance of Manasseh needed a substantial proof of its genuine character, but doubtless it never occurred to the Chronicler, that Manasseh's forcible captivity to Babylon would tend to increase rather than diminish his loyalty to things foreign.

The silence of the Books of Kings and the testimony of the prophets show, that any religious reforms upon the part of Manasseh must be considered as fiction.³ Further, the inferences from the reign of Josiah, expressly imply, that the religious paraphernalia of Manasseh's foreign worship was first removed at that time.⁴

¹ Cf. WELLHAUSEN, *Prol.* p. 202. As the Chronicler invariably paid little attention to the prophets, the passage 33 : 10—13 may be considered as a substitute for 2 K. 21 : 10—15.

² Cf. GRAF, *Theol. Studien und Krit.* 1859, *Die Gefangenschaft und Bekehrung Manasses*, p. 467—494; WELLHAUSEN, *Prol.* p. 202 f.; GRAF, *Die Geschichtlichen Bücher des A. T.*, p. 173 f., 190 f.

³ Jer. 15 : 4; 2 : 5; 31 : 29 f. II K. 23 : 26; 24 : 3 f., 20.

⁴ 2 K. 23 : 4 f. LEHMANN-HAUPT maintains that Manasseh's reforms were matters of fact and constituted an introductory program to Josiah's reforms. This conclusion does not consider at all the value of the Books of Chronicles as a historical source. *Gesch.* p. 319.

(3) MANASSEH'S BUILDING ACTIVITIES.

The Chronicler records Manasseh's building activities in the following manner: "Now after this he built an outer wall to the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entrance at the Fish Gate, and compassed Ophel about with it, and raised it up to a very great height: and he put valiant captains in all the fortified cities of Judah".

We have no archeological proof for the existence of these walls, or are we absolutely certain as to the meaning of this verse and its historical worth. Some authorities claim that the facts rest on worthy and reliable traditions¹, while others maintain that the Chronicler was fond of adding topographical details, especially when it enhanced the glory of Jerusalem.²

Although we have no historical proof of the building activities of Manasseh we have no reason to doubt that Manasseh did engage in some form of building projects. The change in the location of the royal burial grounds implies extensive building activities. Manasseh was not without examples in the persons of kings both small and great. The Assyrians, who were Manasseh's examples in religious practices, were a building people in spite of their military prowess, especially Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal.³ In fact, even local kings of very small realms were wont to boast of their building achievements.⁴ And further, Manasseh had the immediate examples of his predecessors in Jerusalem in the persons of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, who probably furnished the greatest example.⁵

¹ Cf. G. A. SMITH, *Exp. Oct.* 1905, p. 320.

² Cf. TORREY, *AJSL.* Jan. 1909, p. 166. Cf. 2 Chron. 26:6—11 (Uzziah); 2 Chron. 27:3a (Jotham); 2 Chron. 32:30 (Hezekiah-expansion of 2 K. 20:20.)

³ Cf. BEZOLD, *Ninive und Babylon* p. 53 f. Under Esarhaddon Manasseh was in the very significant relation of a vassal obliged to furnish "building materials" for the palaces in Niniveh. Cf. C. H. W. JOHNS, *E. B. col.* 1332.

⁴ Cf. the inscription of Mesha, king of Moab, STADE, *Gesch. I.*, p. 534 f.

⁵ The building of the water conduit by Hezekiah was a great achievement, especially to the oriental mind. It was principally a war measure

V.

THE RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REIGN OF MANASSEH.

The great legacy of the Hebrew race is not to be found within the field of politics or history, but within the field of religion. The Hebrew Scriptures were written by men imbued with a high and sensitive religious nature and their judgements and conceptions were colored by a definite religious and ethical impulse. The political and historical events of Manasseh's reign were matters of small importance to the editor of Hebrew history; but the religious excesses of his day were one of the steps in religious history, which ultimately led to the Fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian Exile. Thus, it is within this field of religion, that we can hope to find the greatest results and significations for the reign of Manasseh.

1) THE REIGN AS A PERIOD OF REACTION.

The events of Hezekiah's reign with its marvelous deliverances of the city of Jerusalem from devastation must have greatly enhanced the power of Jahwe as the local God of Jerusalem and the prestige of the Temple among the remaining sanctuaries.¹ And these events together with the powerful preaching of Isaiah and Micah must have prepared the nation, as never before, for a deep and lasting reform of a religious nature, and that a religious reform followed, in some form or other, we have no reason to doubt.² The reform was not extensive, probably not extending far beyond the limits of the Temple precincts, for in the minds of the redactors Judah and Jerusalem

in spite of its great material benefit. Cf. ROGERS, *History of Babylonia and Assyria*, II, p. 192.

¹ These events cannot be over-emphasized in their relation to the subsequent history of Judah. To the people of the Northern Kingdom Bethel, Shechem, Gilgal, and Shiloh were places of greater veneration and sanctity than Jerusalem.

² The Chronicler's rather extensive series of reforms accredited to Hezekiah are not historical, but are based solely on 2 K. 18 : 4a; 2 Chron. 29 : 3—31.

were often synonymous terms.¹ Also the reform was not very thorough as many of the shrines, which stood around Jerusalem from the days of Solomon remained untouched.² The most we can say is, that it was not a reform in the usual sense of word, but simply a conscientious effort at the centralization of the cultus, a forerunner of the great reform of Josiah.³ It was a reform in the sense that the prophets and religious leaders received better recognition. It was one step towards the assumption of party privileges.⁴

The writers of the Old Testament are unanimous in their conclusions, that the period of Manasseh was a time of religious reaction against the results of centralization and advancement in Hezekiah's reign. There is every evidence to show, that this was a true judgement of the general situation, as the facts of a religious reaction are not easily effaced from the national consciousness of a primitive people.⁵ As to the time of the reaction our historical considerations will not allow the placing of the reaction at the beginning of Manasseh's reign, because the prophetic school or religious party from Hezekiah's time was in the possession of too much power and influence. The most suitable occasion and opportunity for the introduction of new cults and the consequent revival of the native cults was contemporaneous with the presence of the Assyrian in Palestine and the formal submission of Manasseh in 677—76. Although the evidences point to an early beginning of the reaction, yet the full effects were not reached

¹ W. R. SMITH, *Prophets*, p. 364.

² They were first removed by Josiah 2 K. 23 : 4 f. Hezek. may have left them undisturbed, because they were used by the foreign residents; Zeph. 1 : 11.

³ Cf. WELLHAUSEN, *Prol.* p. 48; DUHM, *Proph.* '75, p. 195 f. That a great advance was made and many changes affected we do not deny, for the praise given Hezek. in Kings is equalled by no other king except Asa. Cf. K. 15 : 12, 13; 2 K. 18 : 3 f. "according to all David his father had done".

⁴ Cf. KITTEL, *Gesch.* II. 302 f.; SCHNEIDER, *Kultur und Denken der Babylonier und Juden*, 1910, p. 341.

⁵ Cf. W. R. SMITH, *Prophets*, p. 199. "To the eastern mind an innovation is more irritating than an actual miscarriage of justice".

until the second period of Manasseh's reign, wherein the conditions of peace and luxury were also contributing causes.

As to the cause or causes of this reaction we are much in doubt. One cause, doubtless, must be sought within the general political situations. The conditions were not the best for the endurance of Hezekiah's reforms, especially when we bring into comparison the favorable conditions of Josiah's reforms following the death of Ashurbanipal in 626. Further the absence of the two leading personalities of the preceding period, Isaiah and Hezekiah, was a serious handicap to the religious forces. Perhaps the assumption of too much power upon the part of the successors of the prophets, as over against the rights and tenants of the people's religion, may have led to a popular repudiation of the teachings of Isaiah and Micah.¹ In fact, the radical changes introduced during Manasseh's time seem to indicate a natural resentment and rebellion of the people against a too purified Jahwe-cult, which in turn led to the re-establishment of the old and better understood forms of worship, and a return for the more unrestrained practices of a half-heathen Jahwe worship.²

2) THE REACTION.

The religious reaction under Manasseh was composed of two leading factors, the introduction of the new forms of religious practice, and the revival of the older and more native forms. The former were more especially confined to Jerusalem and immediate vicinity, while the latter thrived principally without Jerusalem in the rural districts.

(1) THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW FORMS.

The most important departure during the reign of Manasseh was the introduction of the practically new forms of religious worship. These new forms were introduced princip-

¹ Cf. WELLHAUSEN, *Gesch.* p. 131.

² Cf. KITTEL, *Gesch.* II, p. 315; WINCKLER, *KAT.*³ p. 271; GÜTHE, *Gesch.* p. 223.

ally from Babylonia and Assyria, during the period when Manasseh's Assyrian policy was crystallizing (677—76f.) The conditions for their introduction were never better as the majority of Judah's neighbors were either people imported from other parts of the Assyrian Empire, or a people so thoroughly subjected to Assyrian rule, that very little of the native element found an opportunity to develop (II K. 17:24f.). Also the intercourse with these peoples must have been frequent and intimate, as they were all, together with Judah, under one provincial form of government. And doubtless, as a tributary province to this ruling authority, it was considered fitting, that the tributary king should show some official recognition of his suzerain's religion.¹ In fact, the success of the Assyrian arms in Egypt may have given support to the idea, that the gods of Assyria were worthy of recognition and even a place in Jahwe's Temple.² Furthermore, the introduction of the Assyrian pantheon may have been a practical necessity, as tributary provinces were not always given the freedom of choice, as for example in the case of Sidon in 677—76, wherein the Assyrian pantheon was forcibly and officially introduced.³ That official recognition of the new cults was actually made, is shown by their reception into the Temple, (2 K. 23:4f. also Jer. 8:19, 7:30), which may have been the determining step in Manasseh's policy.

The greatest innovation in regard to the introduction of new forms was the worship of the "host of heaven" or the

¹ Cf. BUDDE, *Rektoratsrede*, p. 13.

² The introduction of these new cults was made by Manasseh himself, as the king's control of worship was recognized (2 K. 12:4f; 18:4f; 23:3f), and also sacrifices (1 K. 8:5, 64; 9:25; 2 K. 16:12). Cf. also 2 Sam. 20:23f; 1 K. 2:26; 2 K. 8:17. The Temple was only a dependence of the royal palace, and the priests were officers of the king. Cf. WELLHAUSEN *Prol.* p. 132; cf. also 2 K. 12:5f; 2 K. 16:10f.

³ cf. G. A. SMITH, *Exp. Oct.* 1905. p. 310. As a matter of principle the Assyrians introduced their religion into conquered provinces, and according to some authorities it was a regular custom to place images of the king and god Asur in all subjugated and tributary provinces. Cf. A. T. OLMSTEAD, *Western Asia in the days of Sargon of Assyria*, 1908. p. 171.

heavenly bodies.¹ The evidences of its earlier appearances are exceedingly doubtful, if not altogether lacking.² That it became prevalent at this time is shown by the literature of the succeeding periods,³ and that the forms were abundant is shown by the reform of Josiah, wherein the apparatus for the worship was removed (2 K. 23:4f.). The altars were built under the open sky and upon the roofs of the houses and even the Temple itself.⁴ It is questionable, whether or not the worship of the heavenly bodies was facilitated by the use of images or idols.⁵

The leading element in the worship of the "host of heaven" was the worship of the sun, a characteristic Babylonian cult.⁶ Considering the cosmopolitan character of the population of Jerusalem, it is very possible, that the introduction of sun-worship may have awakened an instinct of its former existence. The letters of Abdihiba written from Jerusalem in the fourteenth century B. C. mention a place near Jerusalem, named after the solar deity Ninib, Bit Ninib.⁷

¹ The word צְבָא is a collective term and many times conveys the general meaning of the heavenly bodies. In several instances it conveys the meaning of an "army" of heavenly bodies — a great number. Jer. 33:22. However, this significance came in at a comparatively late period and probably added a great deal to the term "Jahwe of Hosts", which originally meant God of the armies of Israel. Cf. Josh. 5:13f; 1 K. 22:19f.

² cf. W. R. SMITH, *Rel. of the Sem.* p. 135. N. "Among the Hebrews there is little trace of it before Assyrian influence became potent".

³ Zeph. 1:5; Jer. 8:2; 19:13; Deut. 4:19.

⁴ 2 K. 23:12a; Zeph. 1:5; Jes. 19:13; 32:29.

⁵ The signs of the Zodiac may have been represented by symbols and used as objects of worship. ZIMMERN, KAT³. p. 451f., 626f. The term מְזֻלוֹת used in 2 K. 23:5 is from a very late and unreliable source. It is the same word as the Babylonian "manzaltu". The מְזֻלוֹת were probably the signs of the Zodiac, the "stations" or "abodes" of the heavenly deities. ZIMMERN, KAT³. p. 628.

⁶ ZIMMERN, KAT³, p. 368f.

⁷ ZIMMERN, KAT³ p. 411. Budde suggests, that Bit Ninib was Beth Shemesh. Cf. *Das Buch der Richter*, KHC. p. 14f. on Jud. 1:34f. CHEYNE suggests, that הֶרֶס־הָרִים is a Hebraised form of Uras, which is a synonymous term for the god Ninib. He also associates "Heres" with the gate of Har-sith" Jer. 19:2. cf. E. B. col. 2019.

This solar worship seems to have been a matter of importance as horses were considered sacred and consecrated to the sun. They were stationed at the Temple's entrance together with chariots¹, and were in charge of a special official, Nathan Melech.² The use of horses by the Hebrews was not very extensive in pre-exilic times, and it is very likely, that outsiders or special caretakers were necessary thus opening the way for the introduction of strange cults.³

Doubtless, there were many rites and ceremonies connected with the worship of the heavenly bodies, for the reason that elaborate ceremonies were always used in religious practices of that nature.⁴ The use of incense and the burning of costly gums and spices was probably an innovation of Manasseh's time, because of the direct expansion of commercial intercourse and the accumulation of wealth. Its use was discredited by the later prophets, because it was against the fundamental laws of sacrifice, which presupposed that the material of the sacrifice was a gift of Jahwe, that is, a product of his land.⁵ Further, the inferences from Ezekiel's vision of the pre-exilic idolatries of the Temple imply the existence of many rites and ceremonies (Ezek.: 8:16). Ezekiel professed to have seen 25 men standing in the inner court of the Temple between

¹ 2 K. 23 : 11; cf. T. K. CHEYNE, E. B. col. 3585.

² The keeper of the royal stables in Assyria was an important official.

³ cf. O. C. WHITEHOUSE, E. B. col. 725. The particular law in Deut. 17 : 16 was probably formulated to correct the abuses of pre-exilic times. Cf. BERTHOLET, Deut. p. 55f. Isa. 2 : 7.

⁴ Some maintain, that the presence of chariots together with the horses at the entrance of the Temple implies, that they were used every morning to drive out to welcome the sun. Cf. G. F. MOORE, E. B. col. 3356.

⁵ Cf. Jer. 1 : 16; 6 : 20; 11 : 12; 17 : 26; 18 : 15; 19 : 4, 13; 41 : 5; Ezek. 8 : 11; Isa. 43 : 23f; 60 : 6. It is very significant, that Ezekiel makes no provision for incense in his plans for a reformed Temple. The use of incense and the increase in wealth and luxury are generally coexistent elements in a nation's growth or decay. This was especially so in the history of Greece. Cf. T. L. CHEYNE, E. B. col. 2166; STADE, *Gesch. I.* p. 638; WELLHAUSEN, *Prol.* p. 72.

the porch and the altar, with their backs to the sanctuary of Jahwe, and facing the east and worshipping the sun.¹

Another rite, which probably originated in Manasseh's reign and also closely related to the worship of the "host of heaven" is described at much length in the Book of Jeremiah.² The rite has been most commonly designated as the worship of the "Queen of Heaven".³ The peculiarity of this worship consisted in the preparation and offering of a special kind of cake. They were made by the women, but the assistance of the whole family was employed, as in the collection of fire-wood and the making of the fire. In spite of this family assistance the worship seems to have been a women's cult, (Jer. 44:15, 19, 25). The worship of the "Queen of Heaven" must have had a strong hold upon the people, as shown by the importance of her position in public estimation. The direct causes for the calamities resulting from famine and sword were considered as following from a neglect of her worship.⁴

¹ The LXX reads 20 instead of 25 and most probably the number 20 is correct, because the Babylonian sun-god was always associated with the number 20. Cf. JEREMIAS, A. T. im Lichte des alten Orients p. 355. Some scholars have considered the reference in verse 17 as an additional part of this ceremony "and they put the branch to their nose". The text is not in good condition, so JEREMIAS amends it and reads: „Fürwahr, da lassen sie ihren Gestank zu meiner Nase emporsteigen“. Cf. also C. H. Toy, Ezekiel, SBOT, p. 112.

² Jer. 7:16—20; 44:15f. The passage 7:16—20 is very late in origin, but probably a true description based on the older passage 44:15f.

³ The meaning most generally given for מַלְכֶּת הַשָּׁמַיִם is "Queen of Heaven". The most determined opposition to the accepted meaning was made by STADE (ZAW. 1886, p. 123f, 289f), wherein he maintained that מַלְכֶּת is an abbreviation for מְלֹאכֶת or an abstract noun meaning the "ruling powers of heaven", and in general an equivalent to the name הַשָּׁמַיִם. Cf. G. F. MOORE, E. B. col 3992; ZIMMERN, KAT³, p. 441.

⁴ Jer. 44:18. The cakes used probably corresponded to the cakes of Ishtar in the Babylonian religion. Cf. JEREMIAS, A. T. im Lichte des alten Orients, p. 345; ZIMMERN, KAT³, p. 441. The Hebrew כָּן is parallel to the Babylonian word "kamanu". WELLHAUSEN considers the "Queen of Heaven" as the goddess of the "morning star". WELLHAUSEN, Gesch. p. 131f. Note, BUNDE, Rektoratsrede, p. 19. Ishtar = Venus.

A further element of Babylonian origin is mentioned by Ezekiel (8:14), wherein a company of women are represented as weeping for Tammuz. It is maintained, that the idea of an actual Tammuz cult is confirmed, because the women were weeping by the north door of the Temple. In the cult of Tammuz the north point was always the critical point.¹ The worship of Tammuz also implies the probable worship of the moon, as the two cults were closely related.²

(2) THE REVIVAL OF THE OLD FORMS.

The principal part of the reaction, especially for the nation at large, was the revival of the older and the more native forms of religious worship. This revival meant the resurrection of all the forms condemned by the prophets, forms which had been partially suppressed, but not entirely forgotten. The causes for their revival were the natural results of a wide-spread reaction and the introduction of the new cults, which brought about a general condition of laxity in regard to ethical and religious standards. Thus allowed to thrive under royal patronage, the reign of Manasseh probably represents one of the most important periods wherein the folk's religion ruled supreme.

a) MOLECH WORSHIP.

The greatest feature of the revival of the older or more native forms was the practice of human sacrifice or Molech worship. Its practice seems to have been wholly confined to Jerusalem, and in direct contrast to the worship of the "host of heaven" with its altars upon the roofs of the houses and Temple, the practice of Molech worship was always carried

¹ Cf. JEREMIAS, A. T. im Lichte des alten Orients, p. 354f. CHEYNE suggests that this single appearance of the name in the Old Testament is indicative of uncertainty. Cf. E. B. col. 4894; also Decline and Fall of Judah, p. 75. Among the Greeks this cult was known as the Adonis cult, cf. C. H. Toy, Ezekiel, SBOT, p. 112; STADE, Gesch. I. p. 630; BUDDE, Rektoratsrede, p. 9, 14.

² A. C. PATERSON, E. B. col. 3197. NESTLE makes the very interesting suggestion in connection with the text in Zeph. 1:5 that the worship conducted upon the roofs of the houses was a worship of the moon, and that instead of לִיתָּהּ the text should read לִירֵה.

on outside of the walls of the city.¹ The place of sacrifice in the case of Jerusalem was to the south or southwest of the city's walls, which was designated by later writers as Ben Hinnom or the valley of Tophet². The origin of the name מֶלֶךְ is unknown. It occurs but eight times in the Massoretic text³, and several times in the Septuagint.⁴ Most probably the name is a distortion of מֶלֶךְ but pointed with the vowels of בִּשְׁת.⁵ The name was not necessarily considered as a proper noun. The meaning intended was simply the "king-god" or ("divine) king".⁶

The worship of Molech first became prevalent as an established practice during the reign of Manasseh. The literature of the eighth century is practically silent concerning its practice, but on the other hand there are abundant references at the close of the seventh and during the following centuries.⁷ The first distinct mention of Molech worship is in 2 K. 16:3 during the reign of Ahaz. There are some who are inclined to reject this because the passage is wholly from the Deuteronomic redactor, and also because Isaiah does not condemn human sacrifice.⁸ The offering of Ahaz does not imply a

¹ Cf. W. R. SMITH, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 372.

² Cf. WELLHAUSEN, *Gesch.* p. 132; W. R. SMITH, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 377; G. A. SMITH, *Exp. Feb.* 1906, p. 108f.

³ 1 K. 11:7; 2 K. 23:10; Jer. 32:35; Lev. 18:21; 20:2—5. The occurrence of the name in 1 K. 11:7 is a mistake and should probably be read מֶלֶךְ.

⁴ Cf. Amos 5:26; Zeph. 1:5.

⁵ Cf. HOFFMANN, *ZAW.* 1883, p. 124; W. R. SMITH, *Religion of the Semites*, 1894, p. 372. Cf. Ishbaal in 1 Chronc. 8:33 with Ishbosheth in 2 Sam. 2:8 and Meribaal 1 Chronc. 8:34 with Mephibosheth in 2 Sam. 9:6, 12.

⁶ There is a total absence of the name in the writings of Philo and Josephus. Cf. G. F. MOORE, *E. B.* col. 3183.

⁷ Cf. Deut. 18:10; 12:31; Lev. 18:21; 20:2—5; Jer. 7:31; 19:5f; 32:35; Ezek. 16:20; 20:26; 23:37f; "Micah" 6:7. The mention of Abraham's offering (Gen. 22—E) was not written before Ahaz's time, but the question of human sacrifice is decidedly a secondary element in the teaching of the story.

⁸ Cf. G. F. MOORE, *E. B.* col. 3183f. G. A. SMITH maintains, that when Isaiah confronted Ahaz (Isa. 7:3) he took with him "his own son, dedicated by the symbolic name to hope" as a rebuke to the king's dedication of his son to despair. *Exp. Feb.* 1906, p. 113f.

continued practice. It was an attempt to find relief from oppressive conditions, as in the case of the King of Moab.¹

What was the nature of this king-god, Molech, who could demand human sacrifices? Some consider, that he may have been popularly thought of as a god of the underworld, who demanded human sacrifices to people his realm. A god in the sense of the Babylonian Nergal (2 K. 17:30) "a god of pestilence, war, and the country of the dead".² On the contrary, the remonstrances of the prophets clearly indicate that this "Molech" represented none other than Jahwe himself, whom the people imagined demanded these sacrifices.³ It is very probable, that some of the ancient laws may have been cited as proofs of Jahwe's demands.⁴ At any rate, the motive for these sacrifices was from within the people themselves, notwithstanding the conditions of subjection to Assyria may have intensified their prevalence.⁵

In regard to the origin of this Molech worship, it would be very natural to conclude that it came from Babylonia or Assyria, because its prevalence in Judah corresponds with the great period of Babylonian-Assyrian influence. We have no proof of its coming from these countries, because there is a

¹ 2K. 3 : 27. Cf. MARTI, *Gesch. der isr. Rel.* p. 45f. The mention of human sacrifice as one of the sins of Israel (2K. 17 : 17f.) is also from a very late passage and its validity is questioned by several authorities. Some scholars find suggestions of human sacrifice in the writings of Hosea. Cf. MARTI, *Dodekapropheten*, Hosea, 6 : 7 ; 9 : 13f ; 13 : 2.

² cf. BARNES, *Kings*, p. 100.

³ cf. "Micah" 6 : 6f ; Jer. 7 : 31 ; Ezek. 20 : 18f. The appearance of the proper names Nathan Melech (2K. 23 : 7) and Adram Melech (2K. 17 : 24, 31) are very suggestive that מֶלֶךְ may have referred to Jahwe. Cf. G. F. MOORE, *E. B.* col. 3183f ; W. R. SMITH, *Religion of the Semites*, 1894, p. 372 ; G. A. SMITH, *Exp. Feb.* 1906, p. 113. In the case of Ahaz, the offering was to Jahwe. Cf. BENZINGER, *comm.* p. 170.

⁴ cf. *Exod.* 13 : 12 f. and *Exod.* 34 : 20.

⁵ W. R. SMITH in referring to the oppressive conditions among the Northern Semites (7. cent.), wherein they resorted to extraordinary practices, says, "they were guided by the principle that ancient half obsolete forms of ritual are more efficacious than everyday practices of religion". *Rel. of Semites*, p. 349.

remarkable absence of references to human sacrifice in the Babylonian-Assyrian inscriptions.¹ The identification of מלך with the Assyrian name "Malik" seems to find very little support, as "Malik" represents a divine attribute.² . . . Some authorities see in the practice of Molech worship all of the evidences of Egyptian origin.³ The general predominance of the rite among the neighbours of Judah, especially Phoenicia and Moab seems to furnish the strongest indications of a general Canaanitish origin.⁴ The practice was introduced by Ahaz in a manifest case of threatened disaster, and later revived as a practice by Manasseh.

b) MINOR FORMS.

The revival of the minor forms of religious practice must not be considered as wholly new to the inhabitants of Judah. These forms were in use even during the height of religious reform, and many times were so closely associated with Jahwe worship, that all marks of separation were lost. The reign of Manasseh does not mean that the worship of Jahwe was lost, but owing to the lack of prophetic restraint these older forms were allowed the utmost freedom of development.

The centers for the revival of the great majority of the older forms were the "high places". It is asserted by a very late and uncertain authority⁵, that Manasseh built again the "high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed". It is still a debatable question, whether Hezekiah's reform really

¹ Cf. STADE, ZAW 1886, p. 308, and Bib. Theol. p. 232; JEREMIAS, E. B. col. 4121; ZIMMERN, KAT. p. 599.

² Cf. STADE, Bib. Theologie, p. 232f. JEREMIAS suggests that originally the practice was a sun-cult, cf. A. T. im Lichte des alten Orients. p. 355. CHEYNE suggests, that מלך was an equivalent of a Jerachmeelite Baal. Cf. Decline and Fall of Judah p. 24.

³ Cf. E. MADER, Die Menschenopfer, 1909. p. 34 f.

⁴ This conclusion is in harmony with the Old Testament writers. Cf. Deut. 12 : 29—31; 18 : 9—14; Ezek. 16 : 20; Jer. 3 : 24; 19 : 25. Cf. C. H. Toy, Ezekiel, SBOT. p. 135. The value of much of the testimony from these later Old Testament writers is lessened when we consider, that the "abomination of the Canaanites" was especially condemned

⁵ 2 K. 21 : 3 a

included the suppression of the high places or not; but at least it seems strange, that the prophets who inspired these reforms do not condemn the high places, especially Isaiah.¹ The conclusion of this authority was probably the result of an honest consideration of the two good kings Hezekiah and Josiah, which made it necessary for Manasseh to "build" again the high places. The evidences all seem to indicate that the high places were already in existence and that the reign of Manasseh simply witnessed an increase in their use.²

Closely associated with, and in fact a part of the high places, were the Asherah, Masseba, and the local Baalim. That these flourished during Manasseh's reign is well attested by the records of Josiah's reformation, and the laws of Deuteronomy which stringently forbade them.³ The Temple area, doubtless, became a veritable high place itself as shown by the numerous objects of worship present, and also by the inferences from Ezekiel to an image of Asherah, on the north wall of the Temple.⁴ It is difficult to decide the exact meaning of Asherah or Asherim in connection with religious practices, but probably they were associated with a goddess and apparently considered as the consort to the male deity of the locality. They were

¹ Cf. STADE, *Gesch.* I. p. 628. WELLHAUSEN, *Prol.* p. 25f. KITTEL, *Gesch.* II. p. 302f.

² The phrase "to build the high places" or to destroy them meant merely the addition to, or removal of the apparatus of worship upon the high places. These high places were nothing but level sections of ground situated in elevated regions. Several of these high places have been recently discovered, one in Petra and one in Gezer. Cf. *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly* 1900, p. 350; 1903, 23f.; 1904, p. 111. The high places were probably of Canaanitish origin. Cf. WELLHAUSEN, *Prol.* p. 18.

³ 2K. 23:6. Deut. 16:21f., 12:3 also Lev. 26:1; Ex. 34:13; 23:24.

⁴ 2K. 23:6, 7a, 11, 12a, 13; Ezek. 8:5. The usual rendering is "image of jealousy", but it seems uncertain. Evidently the reference is to an Asherah-image. Cf. JEREMIAS, *A. T. im Lichte des alten Orients*, p. 353; TOY, *Ezekiel*, SBOT, p. 110; WINCKLER, *KAT.*³ p. 276. From the verse the indication is that it was standing before the altar gate, thus causing Jahwe to leave his sanctuary. Gunkel amends the text reading for *תַּמְלֵל הַקָּנָה* "Image of the reeds" (*קָנָה*) referring to the dragon of Tiamat. Cf. Psalm 68:31, "Beast of the reeds". GUNKEL, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 1895, p. 141.

distinct from images or altars in the usual sense of the words. Wooden posts were often used as symbols and were placed by the altars of Jahwe and the Baalim.¹ In some instances the identity of the Asherim with the goddess Ashtoreth is evident.² The goddess Ashtoreth was the same as the Babylonian Ishtar, a goddess of life and vegetation³ and in the case of the Assyrians more a goddess of war.⁴ The practices of the "kedeshim" or "sacred prostitutes" were generally associated with the worship of the goddess Ashtoreth and flourished especially in Manasseh's time, because their houses were found within the Temple area⁵, and they were condemned by the laws of Deuteronomy.⁶

The Masseba or Masseboth were closely associated with the Asherim and their presence was used as a criterion in passing judgement upon a king's character. They were a sign of righteousness when they were removed, but if they were tolerated it was a sign of idolatry and unrighteousness. The prevalence of their use in Manasseh's time was wide-spread, because they were invariably the accompaniments of the Asherim. Recent excavations in Palestine have brought to light a certain number of these Masseboth in the form of "stone pillars or monolithes".⁷

The worship of the Baalim was also an important element in religious practice during Manasseh's reign, because of the presence of an organized priesthood (Zeph. 1:4). They were not sun-gods originally, but it is possible, that such a relation

¹ W. R. SMITH, *Religion of the Semites*, 1894, p. 204f., 456f.; NOWACK *Heb. Arch.* II, p. 19; G. F. MOORE, *E. B.* col. 330f; *Jud.* 6:25; *1K.* 14:21f.

² *1K.* 15:13; 18:19. Cf. BARNES, *Kings*, p. 127.

³ ROGERS, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 85.

⁴ cf. A. T. OLMSTEAD, *Western Asia in the days of Sargon of Assyria*, 1908, p. 172.

⁵ *2K.* 23:7a.

⁶ *Deut.* 23:17f; 22:5. Cf. also *Amos* 2:7; 4:3; *Lev.* 20:23. The priests especially were forbidden to tolerate the practice *Lev.* 21:7f. There are instances of it being associated with other deities. *Num.* 25:1—5.

⁷ Cf. *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly* 1903, p. 28; cf. *Gen.* 28:18; *Ex.* 24:4.

may have entered during Manasseh's time. Their revival must have influenced the country classes of Judah to a tremendous extent, because the Baalim were regarded as the patrons of fertility¹ and in honor of them great agricultural festivals were held.²

Many other forms of religious practice were revived, especially the forms of ancient Semitic origin, as shown in presence of Chemosh, the national god of the Moabites, and Milcom, the national god of the Ammonites.³ The derivation of the title Chemosh is unknown, but it may be a fact in itself indicating that he was one of the older Semitic gods. The name Milcom occurs only in the Old Testament, but obviously it is a variation of "Melech".⁴ Human sacrifices were offered to Chemosh⁵ and high places were dedicated to him.⁶ Further, it is most generally considered, that the reference in Ezekiel 8:10, which reads "so I went in and saw, and behold every form of creeping things and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel portrayed upon the wall about", and the reference in Ezekiel 8:11 to the mysteries of the 70 Elders all point to the relics of old Israelitish worship.⁷ That many of these mystery cults succeeded in gaining secure footholds in Judah is seen by the persistence and survival of of many old totem names in Josiah's time⁸ and the presence necromancy and kindred practices.

¹ Hosea 2 : 5, 8, 12, 15.

² Hosea 2 : 8, 13.

³ 2 K. 23 : 13; cf. also Num. 21 : 29.

⁴ W. R. SMITH, Religion of Semites, 1894, p. 67; BARNES, Kings, p. 100.

⁵ 2 K. 3 : 27.

⁶ 2 K. 23 : 13 cf. also late passage 1 K. 11 : 7 a.

⁷ Cf. JEREMIAS, A. T. im Lichte des alten Orients, p. 353. CHEYNE amends the text and reads "and all the idols of the house of Ishmael". CHEYNE, Decline and Fall of Judah. p. 75.

⁸ חֲלָהָה (2 K. 22 : 14), עֲקֹבוֹר (2 K. 22 : 12, 14), and שָׁעָן (2 K. 22 : 3, 8 f.); cf. BROWN-DRIVER, Heb. Lexicon, 1906, p. 317, 747, and 1050—1.

3) THE RESULTS OF THE REACTION UPON RELIGION.

The discussion of any period of time in the life of a primitive folk involves at least the recognition of one important consideration, namely:— that as a direct result of our sources we are dealing only with a small portion of the people, while the great mass of the folk remain untouched. The progress or the decline of Judah was largely in the hands of this small class. It always was through this class that influences of a foreign nature were able to produce changes and even introduce elements of decay. Indeed, it was through this body of leaders of the nation that the real genius and power of Israel revealed itself. For it was impossible for the seeds of monotheism to germinate within the circles of the folk's religion.¹ Oftentimes these leaders of the people were far in advance of the nation at large, as shown by the slow reception of an ethical monotheism.² Hence in seeking for the results of the reaction we are confined almost entirely to this small class of leaders.

The results of the reaction upon the religion of Judah were of two distinct types, results of a negative nature as exemplified in the actual elements of decline, and the more positive results as shown by the presence of developments. The former or negative results were the characteristic features of the religious conditions of Manasseh's reign. The Deuteronomic redactors are unanimous in their conclusions that the results of the reaction were altogether negative in character and totally disastrous to the cause of pure ethics and the claims of a higher religion. That their conclusions were valid is confirmed by the presence of the various foreign cults in Jerusalem, and the return of the nation at large to the old Canaanitish forms of religious practice, which meant that the

¹ Cf. MARTI, *Gesch. der israelitischen Religion*, p. 166f.

² The recent Aramaic documents from Elephantine indicate that monotheism did not receive a full recognition among the people of the colony, because in making provisions for the various taxes levied for religious purposes other deities were recognized as well as Jahwe. In fact, an orthodox monotheism was a late product as shown by many of the Psalms.

high ethical ideals of the prophets were almost entirely forgotten. The latter or more positive results of the reaction were the changes wrought in spite of the predominating influences of dissolution. Some of these results are to be sought in the periods closely following Manasseh's reign, wherein the nation returned to its former program of religious progress after profiting by generations of experience. We have chosen to discuss these results, (1) in regard to the outward form or expression of religion, and (2) in regard to the inner development or content of religion.

(1) THE EXPRESSION OF RELIGION.

The significant changes or developments in the expression of religion were principally the changed relations of the prophets and priests. The closing days of Hezekiah's reign found the prophets advocating, with the purest of motives and even independent from political pressure, doctrines of life and religious reform. And as the champions and fighters of Jahwe their thoughts centered upon an inner renewal of allegiance to Jahwe and a purified cultus, but in spite of their influence they were not a political party or the advocates of such a party. On the other hand at the beginning of Josiah's reign there are evidences of a great transformation, as we find the prophetic forces in league with other forces seeking to bring about a reformation through the channels of legislation. The great reform of Josiah would have been meaningless without the reign of Manasseh, for its measures presuppose the days of his power, and were intended to correct the abuses and religious excesses of his day. It was impossible for the Deuteronomic reforms to have started from the mere fact of "finding" a book, for they were the product of national forces seeking expression. The laws were the product of two forces, as they were prophetic in spirit, but priestly in form and execution, showing as many have termed it, that Deuteronomy was the result of a compromise between priest and prophet.¹

¹ Cf. STADE, *Gesch. I.* p. 624f.; CHEYNE, *Decline and Fall of Judah* p. 11. The prophets of the eighth century even advocated the abolishment

To account for the processes of development in Manasseh's reign, which brought about these changes, is not altogether an uncertainty. Notwithstanding Manasseh's despotic rule, especially in regard to his Assyrian policy, we must not think of the prophetic line as suddenly terminating with Isaiah and Micah, and then suddenly re-appearing in the days of Zephaniah and his contemporaries. It is granted, that conditions of peace and prosperity were generally periods in which there was a notable absence of prophets of the ethical type.¹ There were prophets during Manasseh's time², but probably they were men who lacked the lofty ideals of an Isaiah. The revival of the many native forms of worship doubtless brought in again the old practices of the prophets as soothsaying and divination, causing a redevelopment of the more primitive line of the prophets, somewhat similar to the 400 prophets of Ahab. Their descendants were evidently the so-called "false prophets" of Jeremiah's time, a line of prophets, as Volz says, who were "prophets of a narrow range of vision". At least Zephaniah was proud of his ancestry of four generations reaching back through the dark days of Manasseh.³ On the other hand the proclamation of the laws of Deuteronomy was the death knell to the order of the prophets, for it was a change from the living prophetic word to the priestly interpretation of religion.

of ritual and sacrifice, as there was a growing tendency to consider the performance of sacrifice as fulfilling Jahwe's will, a state of worship wherein the character of Jahwe was easily confused with the other gods. Thus in this case Deuteronomy was a compromise by abolishing sacrifice, yet retaining it in one place under proper safeguards. Some maintain that the Deuteronomic reforms were the climax of a series of earlier reforms in Josiah's reign (cf. G. A. SMITH, *Exp. Nov.* 1905, p. 340). The fact, that the priestly party was in charge of affairs during Josiah's period of adolescence seems to favor this view, but otherwise the evidence is exceedingly doubtful.

¹ Cf. BENZINGER, *Die Bücher der Könige*, p. 108. This may account for the absence of prophets during the second period of Manasseh's reign. Certainly the conditions of the first period were suitable for a prophet.

² BUDDE, *Rektoratsrede*, p. 16.

³ Zeph. 1 : 1a. The "false prophets" in many cases were sincere religious patriots. Cf. 1K. 22 : 13f.; Jer. 28 : 1f.; cf. ДУММ, *Jeremia*, p. 227.

In a sense Jeremiah was the last of the old order of prophets, as after him they were more priestly, theological, and literary.¹ The lack of ethical power may be accounted for in part by the presence of the conditions of luxury and wealth, for such conditions generally contributed a demoralizing effect upon the religious leaders.²

The changes in regard to the priesthood were also significant and noteworthy. Before the reign of Manasseh the original references to the priests are comparatively few, and on every side there is displayed the primitive relation of the priest to religion. The very proximity of the Temple to the royal palace shows that the priests were dependent upon the king, and because of this relation they were early trained in political affairs. That their power was limited before the reign of Manasseh is shown by the absence of laws respecting priests in the Book of the Covenant.³ The laws of Deuteronomy represent the first official recognition of the priests, as they are placed on a footing with the prophets and judges.⁴ This increase in the power of the priests must be accounted for, at least in part, during the reign of Manasseh, wherein the conditions must have bestowed upon them increased power. The addition of so many cults to the Temple meant the multiplying of priestly services and created a demand for laws regarding duties and ranks. The existence of so many altars meant the corresponding presence of many priests. The increase in sacrifices⁵ also entailed an increase in the Temple revenues, but

¹ Cf. WELLHAUSEN, *ProL.*, p. 403; R. SMEND, *Lehrbuch zu A. T. Religionsgesch.*, 1893, p. 276f.

² Cf. Hosea 4 : 3—9; 8 : 11f.

³ Cf. WELLHAUSEN, *ProL.*, p. 133f.

⁴ Cf. Deut. 16 : 18—18 : 22. The origin of the priesthood must not be confused with this official recognition.

⁵ The evidences for the development of sacrifice are extremely few for this period in the history of Israel, but we feel justified in asserting that important changes took place. The success of the Deuteronomic reforms was largely the question of willingness upon the part of the people to give up their local "high places" and their ancient forms of sacrifice. The presence of so many peculiar rites and sacrifices during Manasseh's time

it is questionable whether or not at this early date they were sufficient to cause a perversion of their use.¹

(2) THE CONTENT OF RELIGION.

We must admit, that the aggregate results or changes, as far as the outward forms and expressions of religion were concerned, were comparatively small, but the results from the influences brought to bear upon the thoughts and contents of Judah's religion were apparently greater and of far-reaching importance. The influence of foreign customs and religious cults were potent and significant, for it is only necessary to make a general survey of the literature of the prophets, in order to see the way in which the lands of the Mesopotamian Valley filled the horizon of their prophecies. Thus in order to discuss the results and changes due to this period of reaction and of foreign influence we must take into consideration two facts: a) the literary situation of Manasseh's reign, which is closely concerned with the question of the extent of the period of foreign influence, and b) the religious situation.

a) THE LITERARY SITUATION.

The general result of our analysis of sources seems to favor the conclusion that Manasseh's reign was a period of literary sterility. And still further, the results of our historical discussions seem to furnish remarkable confirmations to this conclusion. This was especially true in the considerations of the second period (660—640), which was a period of peace dominated by the full effects of a religious reaction as eviden-

probably furnished some of the causes for the modification or even abandonment of the local rites.

¹ It is very possible that the priests of the northern districts became so thoroughly changed under foreign influences that they were disowned by the southern priests. Cf. 2 K. 23 : 20. We learn from the Book of Amos that many of the sacrificial feasts were subject to a communal tax upon the districts concerned, and under the conditions of luxury which prevailed various discriminations against the poorer classes resulted. The same conditions probably followed in Judah, because of the various regulations of titles and so forth in Deuteronomy.

ced in the various excesses both religious and social.¹ The conditions of this period were decidedly unfavorable for any literary activity of an ethical nature.² It must be admitted, that the conditions of the first period (685—660) were more suitable for the possibilities of literary effort, but even here the degree of probability is small. The latter half of Hezekiah's reign was a time of great literary activity, as shown by the prophecies of Isaiah and Micah, and the Book of the Covenant.³ And the efforts at reform were probably closely followed by additional literary activities. And in fact there is no reason for supposing that all literary activity suddenly ceased with the death of Hezekiah, but that it continued under the spell of prophetic inspiration at least until the beginnings of Manasseh's reactionary policy in 677—676. To grant any great literary activity for the period 676—660 is doubtful, because of the general religious situation. Hence the only period of Manasseh's reign favorable to literary effort of an ethical and religious nature seems to be the few opening years.

Further, the consideration of the extent of the period of foreign influence is important. The results of recent investigations in regard to the relations of Babylonia to Palestine all indicate, that the facts of Babylonian culture and religion were important factors in the development of the western lands. Also that the Hebrews received many of these elements during their invasion and settlement of Palestine and later on through the intercourse with the Phoenicians and Canaanites additional elements were appropriated. The Tell-el Amarna Tablets (1400 B. C.) clearly show that Babylonian culture was not an

¹ The appearance of the two contract tablets of 651 and 649 doubtless display the evidences of cultural influences, but contract tablets do not constitute a literature.

² The writings of Zephaniah are very valuable in many respects, but they lack the originality of the eighth century prophets.

³ WELLHAUSEN assigns portions of the Book of Exodus (20:2f.), especially the Decalogue, to the reign of Manasseh, but the considerations seem to be largely involved with Micah 6 and 7.

unknown quantity in Palestine.¹ And even during the reigns of David and Solomon this influence was not absent, for the former had a Babylonian secretary² and the latter a "brazen sea" in the Temple. But the period of the most intimate contact of the lands of Mesopotamia with Palestine was from the time Ahaz until Amon, wherein the influences were more intense and direct.³ Thus the assimilation of the Babylonian myths and their use for significant religious purposes cannot be considered as a product of one generation or even one century of foreign dominance. In spite of their many similarities and remarkable parallels the Hebrew stories are not the product of a rapid absorption or a translation from Babylonian-Assyrian originals, but on the contrary they represent a process of years of assimilation and revision.

With these general observations in mind we are now in a better position to offer suggestions as to the origin of some of the secondary passages of J.⁴ The principal matters treated by the later J writers in Gen. 1:1—11:9 are connected with the stories of Cain and Abel, the Flood, and contributions to an ethnographical classification. The story of the Flood is of

¹ Palestine was under Egyptian rule during the period from 15th to 13th centuries, but the dominating civilization was Babylonian. Cf. GUTHE, *Gesch.*, p. 41f.

² Cf. 1 Chr. 18:16 (Shavsha) cf. 1 K. 4:3; 2 Sam. 20:25.

³ Cf. BUDDE, *Rectoratsrede*, p. 6. Ahaz's patronage of things foreign was illustrated in his introduction of a new altar, which was presumably Assyrian, because the Assyrian sovereignty over Damascus was supreme. The introduction of a "sun-dial" (2 K. 16:1f.) is doubtful, and it is probably one of the numerous legends of the prophets. Cf. T. K. CHEYNE, *Isaiah*, SBOT., p. 52, p. 212. "The Steps of Ahaz". Excavations upon the site of Samaria have revealed the influence of the Assyrian upon the architecture of Ahab's palace. Cf. D. G. LYON, *Archaeological Exploration of Palestine* JBL. XXX, 1911, p. 10f. That some of the other foreign nations succeeded in exercising a great influence upon Palestine is seen from a comparison of the relative distance of Palestine from Babylonia and Egypt. The influence of Egypt was potent in regard to architecture. Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Kultur und Denken der Babylonier und Juden*, 1910, p. 282f.

⁴ The secondary passages of J in Gen. 1:1—11:9 are as follows; Gen. 2:10—15; 3:22, 24; 4:2a—16a; 6:5—8; 7:1—5, 7—10, 16b, 12, 17b, 22, 23; 8:2b, 3a, 6—12, 13b, 20—22; 9:18, 19; 10:1b, 8—19; 21, 24—30. These narratives constitute about one-third of the text.

peculiar interest to us, because of its Babylonian origin. The question of supreme importance is, when was this story committed to writing by the later J writers?¹ In the first place it is necessary to understand that at the time of writing, this story of the Flood, and in fact the majority of the Babylonian myths were practically a part of the body of Hebrew traditions, even though Babylonian in origin. And to place the writing of these stories in Manasseh's reign seems unwarranted, because of the short period of time when literary activity was possible, and because of the general dearth of contemporary literary products.² The reign of Manasseh was above all a period wherein the collective writing of a religious school of writers was impossible. The secondary J narratives are not the work of one man, and especially the story of the Flood, but rather the product of a school of writers. Consequently the majority of the doubtful secondary passages of J, with a few minor and possible exceptions (Gen. 2:10 — 15), must be placed before 676, or even earlier. The most opportune time is in the latter half of Hezekiah's reign.³

b) THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION.

The wars of the Assyrians, besides being waged for personal ambition and self-protection, were crusades conducted for the purpose of extending the worship and authority of the gods of Assyria. And as this wave of conquest, military and religious, advanced towards Palestine the nations either submitted and were made objects of Assyrian civilizing influences, or they arose in opposition and were blotted out of existence.

¹ BUDDE places this story in the reign of Ahaz. Cf. *Urgeschichte*, p. 515f. Cf. *Rektoratsrede*, wherein he favors Manasseh's reign. STADE places it in Manasseh's reign. Cf. *Gesch.* I. p. 631. The noticeable absence of any contributions from E in the earliest stories is considered by many as an indication of the late reception of the stories by J. The exact reason for this absence is not known. It may be simply a result of the redaction.

² The secondary passages of J cannot be placed very near D, because of the inferior conception of Jahwe. D is more monotheistic.

³ Concerning the story of the Flood. Cf. GUNKEL, *Genesis*, p. 55f.; ZIMMERN, *KAT*³ p. 543f., p. 559f.; GUNKEL, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, p. 135, 143f., 423f.

The apparent powerlessness of the local and national deities against the gods of their conquerors led to an universal revival and patronage of mystic cults and peculiar religious practices. This proved not only to be the resulting situation in Judah, but also throughout all of the Northern Semitic lands of Western Asia.¹

We have already noted the various elements of this reaction in Judah, but there still remains a most unique consideration, which was probably a contributing factor in causing changes, namely: the reception of the Assyrian pantheon within the precincts of the Temple of Jahwe. It was a situation new to the people of Jerusalem, because no complaint was ever made concerning foreign worship in the Temple before Manasseh's time. For many generations the various local deities of Palestine had been recognized and some of them even tolerated in connection with Jahwe worship, but this situation represents the first intimate experience of the Hebrews with a complete hierarchy of deities. And this reception of new deities into the Temple of Jahwe was the equivalent to an official recognition. Apparently Jahwe remained the master and chief occupant of the main part of the sanctuary, but what were his relations to the various orders and ranks of the incoming deities? BERNARD STADE was the first one to see significant relations in these conditions of Temple polity, but evidently he was wrong in making some of his conclusions.² Jahwe remained as over-lord and the various deities must have taken a lower rank as guests, for the laws of Deuteronomy clearly imply that it was not necessary to reinstate him as ruler of the land.³ No matter how far the people's worship

¹ Cf. W. R. SMITH, *The Religion of the Semites*, 1894, p. 358.

² Cf. STADE, *Gesch. I*, p. 629. "In Beziehung zu einander müssen sie gesetzt worden sein, und mythologische Vorstellungen synkretischer Art werden sich gebildet haben, sei es, daß man Jahwe dem Himmelsheere einordnete, oder unterordnete, oder, was weniger wahrscheinlich ist, überordnete". BUDDE holds that the "Unterordnung" was one of the least possible of arrangements. Cf. *Rektoratsrede*, p. 10.

³ Cf. BUDDE, *Rektoratsrede*, p. 10. The Assyrian religious leaders could take no offence because of this arrangement, for the relationships of

of Jahwe was removed from the former ideals of the prophets, it was impossible for him to be pushed back into an inferior rank, because of the general solidarity of religion and national life. A primitive nation's worship was as constant a factor as its political identity (Jer. 2:11), and it was impossible to change a people's religion without a corresponding change in nationality as well.¹ Indeed, Manasseh had no thought of "denying Jahwe's divinity in the land of Jahwe's inheritance", for god and land were inseparable — the destruction of the one likewise meant the downfall of the other.²

That this situation in the very Temple of Jahwe failed to produce some of the links in the development leading to an ethical monotheism, no one will deny.³ The additional significance of the term "Jahwe of Hosts", was a decided advance over the conceptions at the beginning of the seventh century. And the fact that the prophets were beginning to deny existence to other gods was indicative of radical changes. At the same time we cannot agree with BUDDE, that these changes were realized in Manasseh's reign. The struggle which brought about the final triumph of Jahwe did not come to a crisis as long as the pantheon or portions of it remained in the Temple. The first motive to a realization of Jahwe's supremacy probably came with the cleansing of the Temple in 621. Indeed, we feel, that not until after the Fall of Nineveh and the prophecies of Nahum did the idea of the supremacy of Jahwe over the gods of Assyria assert itself. The entire transition

the two religions were considerable and Jahwe was easily recognized as the "God of Hosts". Cf. BUDDE, *Rektoratsrede*, p. 15.

¹ Ruth 1:15 f.; cf. Jer. 7:4—15. The presence of foreigners in Jerusalem may have facilitated the introduction of some new cults into the Temple, which in turn may have produced changes in the question of a client's privileges, cf. Ezek. 44.

² Cf. MARTI, *Gesch. der israel. Religion*, p. 169.

³ We must not think of the development of religious beliefs in Judah as the result of philosophical speculation and reflection. The term "monotheism" is a philosophical term used by later generations. The religion of Judah was not a system of belief, but rather a body of traditional practices. It was institutional not dogmatical. Cf. MARTI, *Gesch. der israelitischen Religion*, p. 168 f.

or development was the result growing out of the generations of experience in Manasseh's reign, but not a result realized during the experience.¹

VI. CONCLUSIONS.

The reign of Manasseh represented the Assyrian conquest of Judah, the final fulfilment of the policy initiated by Ahaz. What the invincible arms of Assyria by means of bloodshed and violence failed to accomplish, was ultimately achieved by a peaceful conquest of commerce, culture, and religion. The submission of Manasseh was the only practical alternative cognizant with a continuation of the nation's existence.

The first period of the reign (685—660) was essentially a period of innovations and great historical events, for Judah was an eye-witness to some of the significant political movements of the seventh century. The introduction of the new social and religious customs, the factors in the beginnings of a religious reaction, must be placed contemporary with Manasseh's formal submission to Assyria (677—676). The second period (660—640), a sequel of the first, was primarily a period of peace and a time of great material and social growth, which culminated in a general decline of religious ideals.

The reign of Manasseh also represented a religious crisis and a time of literary sterility. It was a period of religious decline and an emphatic denial of the ideals of the eighth century prophets. The reaction to the claims of a higher religion was manifested in two ways by the introduction of the new cults or the problem of a religious syncretism, and the revival of the communal cults, or the supremacy of the folk's religion.² There was noticeable absence of literary products

¹ BUDDE's arguments for placing the story of the Flood in Manasseh's reign, which are largely dependent upon an early realization of Jahwe's supremacy, seem to be inconclusive. In fact, the arguments for the „Einköpfung“ of the myths as advanced by both STADE and BUDDE seem subject to the same criticism. Cf. Rektoratsrede, p. 17 and 21.

² The religion of Judah was closely associated with the religions of the surrounding nations. The underlying principles were practically the same. In fact it was a continuous struggle for the prophets to keep the religion of the Hebrews from reverting to a lower form.

of a religious merit, which was a natural sequence of the religious situation.¹

The reign of Manasseh was not altogether a period of decline and retrogression. The growth of the population of Judah, and the increase in commercial and social relations were important elements in the nation's prosperity. The changed relations of the prophets and the priests were an outgrowth of Manasseh's time. The laws of Deuteronomy represented a remarkable work and recovery from the abuses of the foregoing age, which ultimately added significance to the conception of Jahwe's character.² The results from the Assyrian-Babylonian sources were comparatively small. The influences were potent, but they do not explain the institutions of the Hebrews. The genius of their institutions find their only logical explanation in the Hebrews themselves.³ The reign of Manasseh was a valuable half-century of experience, and it was hardly possible for Judah to realize a new aspect of things without doing an injustice to the preceding days of advancement. "We may regret with Goethe the losses, which culture sustains in the victory of one half-truth over another, but it is certain that in the growth of man's spirit such losses are inevitable."⁴

¹ The admission of this fact does no injustice to the general historical and religious situation of Judah. It is not necessary to consider the periods of literary productivity as being contiguous. Practically all critics admit of the unsuitable conditions of Manasseh's reign for literary effort, but many are unwilling to admit the absence of literary results. Some have even postulated a literary activity in Egypt in order to avoid these conditions. Cf. EWALD on Deut.

² The dark days of Manasseh seem to have stamped the character of Deuteronomy by introducing a more gloomier aspect of religion. In the last analysis the laws of Deuteronomy were a poor improvement over the excellent foundations of Isaiah's work.

³ The laws and institutions of the Romans were a product of Roman genius, notwithstanding the preponderating influences of the Etruscans and Greeks. The small kingdoms of Moab and Edom possessed many of the common characteristics of Judah, and during the reign of Manasseh they were likewise under the direct influences of Assyria, but they finally failed in leaving anything to future generations.

⁴ EDWARD CAIRD, *The Evolution of Religion*, 1899, Vol. I, p. 382.



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